Stvacintāmaṇi of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa

The Wish-fulfilling Jewel of Praise

Translated and Commented

by

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Dev Publishers & Distributors
New Delhi

Published by:
Dev Publishers & Distributors
Second Floor, Prakash Deep,
22, Delhi Medical Association Road,
Darya Ganj,
New Delhi-110002

www.devbooks.co.in

ISBN 978-93-94852-56-3
First published 2023
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Printed in India

parakāśamāne paramārthabhānu
naśyatyavidhyātimire samaste/
tadā budhā nirmaladṛṣṭayo'pi
kiṁcinna paśyanti bhavaprapañcam//

When, due to the effulgence of the supreme sun, is destroyed the entirety of darkness of ignorance, then the wise ones, having attained the purity of vision, do not at all see the objective world existing before them.

Ācārya Kṣemarāja

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Preface

It is assumed that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyāṇa most probably was a contemporary of Utpalācārya, and so he must have lived approximately during 900–950 CE, which is to say: During the period when Somānanda had already laid firm philosophical foundation of Kashmir Shaivism through his *magnum opus*, namely, the *Śivadṛṣṭi*. Insofar as the personal life of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is concerned, we know very little, and whatever we know, it is derived from the commentary of Kṣemarāja, called *Vivṛti*, on the *Stvacintāmaṇi*. Kṣemarāja informs us that prior to his commentary, the text of *Stvacintāmaṇi* already had a commentary of Śrī Rāma. Further he informs us that he, more or less, follows the commentary of Śrī Rāma while commenting on the text. We are also informed that the name of the grandfather of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was Parmeśvara, whereas the name of the father was Aparājita. The name of the mother was Dayā and of the elder brother was that of Śaṁkara. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has referred to his grandfather, father, mother and elder brother in the first three verses of the *Stvacintāmaṇi*. In the first verse Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa adores the Lord by offering worship to "Parameśvara," which is to say: to the Supreme Lord, and Parameśvara happens to be the name of the grandfather. In the second verse he pays homage to the unconquerable (*aparājita*) Lord, and it is through this nomenclature that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa reveals as to who his father was. In this very verse, while mentioning the five "energies" of the Lord, the poet refers to the divine energy, namely, the energy of will through the nomenclature of "Dayā," which happens to be the name of his mother. In the third verse worship is offered unto Paramaśiva by uttering the name of "Śaṁkara," which happens to be the name of his brother. In this manner the poet, while offering obeisance to Paramaśiva, mentions

the names of his grandfather, father, mother and elder brother. It would have been difficult, nay, impossible, for us to know as to who were the members who constituted the family lineage of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa had Kṣemarāja not revealed them in his commentary, namely, the *Vivṛti*. From the information that Kṣemarāja has supplied concerning Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa it can safely be concluded that the composer of the *Stvacintāmaṇi* is different from the commentator of the *Mṛgendra-tantra*, namely, from Nārāyaṇa Kaṇṭha. This we know from the information that Nārāyaṇa Kaṇṭha has provided concerning his parentage. He tells us in his commentary that the name of his grandfather was Śaṁkara and that of the father: Vidyāpīṭha. If this be the case, then it is quite easy to differentiate Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa of *Stvacintāmaṇi* from Nārāyaṇa Kaṇṭha of *Mṛgendra-tantra*.

The aim of the verses of the *Stvacintāmaṇi* is to proclaim effectively the non-dualistic doctrines of Trika Shaivism. It seems that people in general were still adhering to such forms of Shaivism that adhered either to dualism or to mono-dualism. As to why people adhered to inferior forms of spirituality is because of the enactment of such a divine play in terms of which the Lord, as it were, plays the game of hide-and-seek, which is to say: the game of "concealment" (*tirodhāna*) as opposed to "revelation" (*anugraha*). It is in the context of the play of "revelation" versus "concealment" that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa in one of the verses says: Lord, you do not seem to be disclosing the knowledge of thy nature to those who are ignorant, which is to say: who are caught up in the web of delusion, whereas, on the other hand, you willingly seem to be revealing the knowledge of your essential nature to those who, according to you, are deserving (*Stvacintāmaṇi*, v. 72). In the midst of such a situation Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa holds a ray of hope when he, with conviction, asserts that it is the path of devotion that would enable the ignorant to have the right perspective concerning the spiritual vision of non-dualism. He delineates the idea of devotional spirituality as being the ultimate cure for the disease called ignorance when he maintains that it is so wonderful that the Lord reveals himself easily to those devotees who may merely look at

his image or think about him (*Stvacintāmaṇi*, v. 97). The notion that the Lord is not away from his devotee is explained through such a philosophical statement as would establish within phenomena the immanent presence of the divine epiphany. It is stated that there is a constant flow of divine consciousness towards what we call phenomena. This flow of the divine epiphany is not a one-sided affair. This flowing of divine consciousness is a twofold movement: it flows from the Divine towards the world, and from the world it flows back to the Divine. This immanent presence of the flow of divine consciousness is experienced at that point of worship when the devotee prostrates before the Lord, which denotes of taking the full refuge under the protective wings of Paramaśiva. It is a refuge characterized by surrender in terms of which one perfectly clings unto the Lord. This aspect of spirituality is expressed thus: Even if one may be floating in the ocean of becoming, yet the devotee is capable of finding the "wish-fulfilling jewel" the moment his love for the Lord reaches its zenith (ibid., v. 36). Since we, in one way or the other, suffer from such spiritual deficiency as would accrue under the influence of "impurity of difference," so the only remedy, according to the poet, is to seek such medicinal herb (*añjana)* as would be capable of removing the cataract of darkness. And the medicine that has the capacity of destroying every veil of concealment, and thereby of darkness, is nothing but the unbounded devotional love for the Lord. It is because of this reason that the poet, instead of seeking the light of the candle of knowledge, seeks the light of the candle of devotion. The true nature of devotion lies not in bowing to Paramaśiva, but in bowing to the prostrations of the devotee. It is the prostration of the devotee which constitutes, according to the poet, the heart/essence of devotion (ibid., v. 25). This wish-fulfilling jewel, according to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, fulfills all the desires of those devotees who hold it in their hands (ibid., v. 121). Accordingly is asserted that they who sing this hymn passionately and with devotion achieve everything whatever they desire.

Finally, I must express my grateful thanks to my grand-daughters, Matrī and Pārthavī, for their unstinted support insofar as the completion of the text is concerned. I must also express my thanks

to an inert entity, which is to say as if devoid of cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*). It is an Absolute that is full of convivial vibrancy, and thereby throbbing with such pulsation (*spandanaṃ*) as would make it live and active (*sakriyā*). And it is for this reason that there exists ample scope for such mysticism that is deeply rooted in "the mysticism of love" to flourish within the over-all doctrinal framework of Trika Shaivism. It were such outstanding thinkers as well as mystics as, for example, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa of tenth century, Utpaladeva of tenth century and Lalleśvarī of fourteenth century who were responsible in giving the final expression, within the framework of over-all non-dualistic theism, to the Trika devotional mysticism. These outstanding mystics ignited the mysticism of love in Trika Shaivism in such a manner as would devour all forms of differentiating obstructions by reducing them to a heap of ashes, representing thereby the state of unity.

The term "devotion" (*bhakti*) is so understood by the practitioners of "the way of love" as to mean supreme respect for, and adoration of, God. It is an understanding that would maintain that devotion to God should be such as would be free from any kind of worldly attachment, which would, at the same time, mean that the emotion of love for God should be so cultivated as not to have any scope for any other desire except the desire of being possessed by God. Thus devotional mysticism, according to this understanding, must not be treated simply as a means to an end, but must be seen as an end in itself. In such a scheme of thinking knowledge or action would hardly be given any kind of credit insofar as general formulation of spirituality is concerned. Since this devotional love for God essentially is a kind of divine theophany, so for the devotee it would entail complete self-effacement in terms of which may be experienced the intensity of the outpouring of divine love. It is within this crucible that the Trika devotional mysticism needs to be evaluated.

The trajectory of Trika devotional mysticism is so formulated by its practitioners as would not allow any kind of spiritual impediment/obstruction to emerge insofar as its practical cultivation is concerned. The devotional love, thus, for God is so conceived as to be free from religious or social restrictions. The

flow of love between God and the devotee has to be free from impediments. What is really required of a mystic is to be possessed by such a spontaneous "flame of desire" as to be consumed completely by the divine love for and of God. The flame of desire within the heart of a true devotee burns in such a manner as would look at the path of love the only means for attaining to the state of identity with Paramaśiva. The first notable Trika mystic who gave a clarion call to the unbounded love for Śiva was none else than the direct disciple of Vasugupta, namely, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. The lyrical composition in which he gave vent or expressed his deep adoration and reverence for Śiva is known as the *Stvacintāmaṇi*, or *The Wish-fulfilling Jewel of Praise.* This lyrical composition of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa consists of hundred and twenty verses, and the focus of these verses basically is to give poetic expression to the loving union of Śiva-Śakti, and in terms of which is explained that the union between the two is nothing else than the unity of consciousness as light (*prakāśa*) and cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*).

The mystical torch of devotional mysticism that was lit by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was further enhanced by the poetic vision of Utpaladeva who is said to have lived at the end of ninth century and the first-half of the tenth century. The theoretical formulation of the Pratyabhijñā metaphysics which his teacher, namely, Somānanda, formulated in his most abstruse philosophical composition, namely, *Śivadṛṣṭi*, was so elaborated by Utpaladeva in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* as to immortalize the Trika lineage forever. Utpaladeva was not only an original and outstanding thinker, but was a mystic of unfathomable depth. The poetical composition that he composed, namely, the *Śivastotrāvalī*, does not so much concern itself with the abstract definition or formulation of love, but, rather, engages itself in explaining the spiritual experiences in such a manner as to be constituted by allusions. Since very little use is made of concepts or images, so it is quite an arduous task to understand the significance of mystical experiences that are narrated in this poetical composition of Utpaladeva. It is on account of such a complicated format of the text of *Śivastotrāvalī* that it is quite difficult to translate its verses into another language.

The third great mystic who is responsible in popularizing the Trika devotional mysticism among the common populace of Kashmir is undoubtedly none other than Lalleśvarī, popularly known as Lallā or Lalla Dêd, of fourteenth century. She was married, as was the custom at that time, at an early age, and had to endure every kind of hardship that was inflicted upon her either by the husband or by the mother-in-law. The pain and anguish of her married life had become so intolerable that she, by renouncing the worldly mode of existence, adorned herself with an ascetic mode of life. As a wandering mystic, she would, when in deep ecstatic mood, utter such verses as would directly penetrate the heart of the individual. Her four-line verses not only possess musical charm, but also contain the wealth of information concerning the various modes of experience that a mystic undergoes when engaged in the exploration of interior spiritual life. All her mystical experiences are so couched as to draw the main inspiration from images that are constitutive of everyday life of common people. Her verses are so natural and spontaneous outpouring as to be completely devoid of artificial poetical embellishments. The mystical quatrains are so composed as would engagingly describe Lallā's own mystical journey, and so may be seen as constituting a kind of personal biography.

All the three mystics, namely, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, Utpaladeva, and Lalleśvarī, resonate and reverberate with the experience of intimacy of divine presence in their personal lives. It becomes abundantly clear from their compositions that they are so resigned to the divine will as to have, through the ascetical fire of self-effacement, reduced themselves, as it were, to the state of non-existence, which is to say: to such a form of Beingness in which no trace of psycho-physical construct, called ego, is to be found. It is a state of existence in which is experienced the contingent nature of life-in-the-world, which, in other words, means complete dependence upon, in the form of surrender, the Lord is seen as a *sine qua non* of phenomenal existence. Whatever they might have experienced at the levels of the body, mind and spirit was appropriately given the verbal expression, in the form of poetry, after coming out from the various mystical states. The verses, which

these mystics composed, are so original and authentic as to allow us to share their struggle, pain, madness and even what may be called the mystical wonder as delight. It is the realization of divine servitude, and nothing else, which seems to be the goal of their spiritual trajectory, and it is with this sense of servanthood that the journey of life, in the full glare of divine presence, is conducted and carried out.

God of Trika Devotionalism

It could be pointed out, at the very outset, as to how it is possible to speak of devotional mysticism when the Trika thinkers adhere to an absolutism in which there exists no possibility for a personal God to flourish. It is absolutely true that the Trika has formulated, as well as affirmed, such a philosophical framework that is non-dualist in approach, orientation and content. The non-dualism of the Trika, however, is not so impersonal and indeterminate as to verge on nihilism, which is to say: to have an Absolute that is so inactive as to be inert. It has conceived the Absolute so theistically as to be able to maintain a proper equilibrium between the God of religion and the Absolute of philosophy. The Absolute is not so transcendent (*viśvottīrna*) as to be unapproachable or totally "the other," but is so conceived as to be immanent (*viśvamaya*), and this immanence is so characterized as to be constituted by the powers of will (*icchā-śakti*), knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*), and action (*kriyā-śakti*), which, as it were, are the essential signs or ingredients of absolute autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute (*anuttara*). It is in the exercise of this autonomy in terms of the above innate powers that the Godhead (*īśvaratva*) of the Absolute is affirmed, which, theoretically speaking, denotes the affirmation of such a philosophical absolutism whose heart is essentially constituted by theism. It is through the aspect of its Godhead that the Absolute, which is identical with consciousness (*cit, saṁvid*) or Self (*ātman*), manifests itself as objectivity in the form of the universe in the manner reflected images are reflected in a mirror (cf. *Tantrāloka*, 2.3-4). It means that the presence of God within the universe constitutes the ground as well as the reason for whatever exists phenomenally. Thus the idea of the Absolute as being the Godhead

has appropriately paved the way for the kind of devotional mysticism that found its fullest expression through the lyrical compositions of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, Utpaladeva, and Lalleśvarī.

It is within this conceptual framework of the Absolute as being the Godhead, and thereby the cause (*kāraṇa*) and ground (*ādhāra*) of the universe that has so spiritually empowered the Trika devotee as would enable him to perceive the holy presence of Śiva in everything and everywhere. Such a vision is further strengthened by a viewpoint which maintains that the universe is but the self-expression or self-extension (*sva-vikāsa*) of Paramaśiva itself. It is this affirmative holy presence of the Lord within the continuum of space and time that so opens up the heart of the devotee as to make him offer his worship unto Śiva in terms of perceiving him as the embodiment of compassion and grace as well as the ultimate refuge of the lost (*Stvacintāmaṇi*, vv. 35, 52). It is this experience of closeness, of intimacy, of presence that is expressed by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa thus:

> As you are here, so I am holding you (firmly) in my fist (lest you may run away). As you are (present) here (in the universe), so I have seen you – where are you (now intending) to flee? (It is) with such (inspiring) words that the fortunate one, nourished with the sentiment of devotion, rushes to Śiva, the Lord weighted with matted locks (*Stvacintāmaṇi.*, v. 68).

Utpaladeva also expresses this experience of close intimacy with God in such a manner as to have the essential realization of God as being the ultimate refuge and basis of every contingent being, nay of whatever exists, animate or inanimate. It is an experience in terms of which is explained the existential fact that apart from God nothing has the possibility to exist. As God is the source and the basis of everything, so his presence permeates as well as elevates the entire universe. It is within the framework of such experience of divine presence that Utpaladeva says the following:

> Since thou art the Primal Being (*ādipuruṣa*), the unique one, the refuge of all beings, so thou (evidently) art the Supreme Person (who) constantly is (always) vigilant in a world that is (in a state) of slumber (*Śivastotrāvalī*, 3.14; 14.18).

Once the devotee is enflamed by the flame of love, he rushes to Śiva with the intention of finding such refuge in him as would protect him against all forms of anguish. The renunciation of all worldly ties of the devotee parallels the ascetic character of Śiva himself. Thus the renunciatory asceticism of the devotee and the meditative asceticism of Śiva are made to co-exist in such a manner as would facilitate the flowing forth of disinterested love for Śiva from the heart of the devotee.

Śiva as the supreme ascetic is so depicted as to make him the embodiment of divine terror and in terms of which is affirmed his transcendence. He is so transcendent as to be totally other, which means that his infinitude is so extensive as to be the cause of awe for the limited creatures of the world. It is this unfathomable and undefinable nature of God that so terrifies the denizens of the world as to depict him in iconographical terms as representing the divine terror that is so terrifying as would devour everything. In biblical terms this fear exists in the minds of human beings precisely because God is seen as being wrathful and vengeful. Thus Śiva as God is shown as having his hair rolled up in a bun. While totally naked except the lion-cloth, made of tiger skin, around his waist, he wears around his neck snakes as well as the garland of skulls which, when engaged in cosmic dance, move up and down in such a fashion as if seized by the inebriated madness and frenzy (ibid., 20.2). Such a depiction of Śiva is meant to capture the symbolism of universal consciousness and in terms of which is explained the undefinable state, namely, the state of Bhairava (*bhairava avasthā*), of the Absolute as being the source of life of everything that is phenomenal. As undefinable, Śiva as God is so transcendent as to be fearful (*bhairava*). And it is this sense of fearful awe of Śiva that is linked to the imagery of the universe as being a vast and haunted cremation ground. Having cremation ground as his dwelling-place, Śiva accordingly is shown to be drinking from the skull-bowl the intoxicating nectar that is permeated by the taste of the universe (Abhinavagupta, *Paramārthasāra*, vv. 79-80). The ascetical aspect of Śiva also represents the spiritual fire of sacrifice and into which all forms of differentiating diversity, whether conceptual or perceptual, is

offered as oblation, and thereby the sense of difference is reduced to a heap of ashes, which embodies the non-dual aspect of unity (Utpaladeva, op.cit., 2.2).

As an ascetic yogī, Śiva is shown as being so absorbed in meditation as to have transcended the human condition. As a typical yogī, he wanders through arid deserts as well as makes his abode in such places that are either haunted or are solitary. Such an imagery concerning Śiva is meant to delineate the idea that a true yogī not only overcomes the physical hurdles and limitations, but also becomes the master of himself as well as of the physical environment that may surround him. Such a portraiture of Śiva does not mean that the Trika votaries are agreeable to the idea that the external forms of asceticism are a necessary pre-requisite for spiritual ascension. They are totally opposed to such a kind of asceticism that verges on bodily torture or abuse. Instead of trudging the trajectory of practice of external forms of asceticism, a Trika yogī is asked to internalize asceticism in such a manner as would make him capable of removing impurities. A true yogī through his ascetic flame burns the impurities that block the way to the center of the heart. Thus the ascetical practices of a yogī transform themselves into an authentic renunciatory mode of spirituality in terms of which entrance is made into the solitude of interiority, which means the realization of such a spiritual state that perfects and completes the process of detachment from every kind of external relationship, which are either pleasure-giving or pain-producing. This renunciatory detachment is not the outcome of external asceticism. It is, rather, the result of interior contemplation that is directed towards Śiva.

The Sense of Servitude

The yogī, thus, detaches himself, on the one hand, from the world and, on the other hand, attaches so heroically himself to Śiva as to remain in his constant and uninterrupted presence. As a consequence of this heroic attachment to Śiva, the yogī completely forgets himself in the manner "the Creator-God," who is Śiva, forgets himself in his own contemplative absorption (George Grierson & L.D. Barnett, eds. and trans., *Lallavākyāna, or The Wise*

Sayings of Lal Dêd, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1920, q. 59). Thus the ascetic-yogī, while offering himself as a gift in terms of mystical self-immolation, seeks nothing but the undifferentiated nectar of oneness from Śiva. In terms of actual praxis it means that the Trika yogī offers himself as a sacrificial victim to the fearsome and blazing "fire of consciousness" (*cidāgni*) as would terminate in the devouring of gross and subtle forms of differentiation (Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, op. cit., v.11). The red-hot flames of burning consciousness not only purify the yogī by consuming the impurities of differentiation, but make him such an automaton as would make him to respond only to the stimulus of divine will. In this manner the yogī replaces his personal will with the will of Śiva, and accordingly it is Śiva alone who controls the activities of his devotee. By subjugating himself completely to the will of Śiva, and accordingly it is Śiva alone who controls his devotee. By subjugating himself completely to the will of Śiva, the ascetic-yogī attains the status of a "slave of God." It is as a slave/servant of God that he realizes his utter "nothingness", and as a result of this, the sense of nothingness or contingency fructifies into a knowledge that is expressed by Lallā in this way:

> When I beheld Him, that He was near me I saw that all was He, and that I am nothing.
> (*Lallavākhyāna,* q. 31).

The realization of being a servant of God stems from the feeling of contingency, which explains the idea that an empirical being exists precisely because of God. What it amounts to saying is that it is God from whom proceeds the existence both of sentient and insentient entities. Since an empirical existent owes its existence to God, so it means that he is entirely dependent on him. This dependence on God delineates the idea that an individual existent, in comparison to God, is nothing. Whatever value he has is precisely because of him being an icon, an image, a reflection of the Divine. It is so because God, being unlimited and infinite, is supreme, which is to say that God is the ultimate point of reference of and for everything. Since the Divine is supreme, so accordingly the nature of God is explained by making the use of such intellectual concepts as, for example, unconstrained and unbounded. In

comparison to the infinitude of the Divine, an individual is seen, on account of his contingent nature, to be representing the state of dependency and limitedness. It is this sense of awe concerning the infinitude of the Divine that led Pascal to say that he does not believe in the God of scientists or philosophers, but in such a God that has revealed himself through the acts of history. Although this sense of servitude may initially seem to be enunciating the doctrine of duality, yet it is transcended when the mystic savours the uninterrupted flavour of the nectar "whose taste is the undifferentiated union with you (viz. with Śiva)." Thus Utpaladeva makes it quite clear that the very nectar that the ascetic-yogī has drunk has flown forth from the divine ocean precisely because of having realized the mystical union with Śiva. Had not this nectar of undifferentiated union been tasted by the mystic Utpaladeva, then it would "not be worthy of undergoing your (viz. of Śiva's) slavery here on earth even for a moment" (Utpaladeva, op.cit., 4.18). All these mystical outpourings clarify the point that the status of a servant of God is not attainable unless the idea of ego is abandoned – and the abandonment of ego is possible only if it is burnt in the enflaming heat of asceticism. It is by becoming the servant of God that a true devotee finds his true glory and splendour in terms of which he takes the cosmic pride of being dependent on Śiva. The devotee through the loss of the psycho-physical construct, called ego, ultimately attains the status of a universal servant, and Lallā expresses this idea thus:

> He (viz., the ascetic-yogī) hath slain the thieves – desire, lust, and pride. When he hath slain these highway robbers, he hath thereby made himself the servant (of all). (George Grierson, op. cit., q. 43).

Such devotees are considered, according to this way of thinking, to be truly free who have become the servants of Śiva in such a manner as to depend and subsist upon him alone. This dependent disposition upon Śiva deepens so much so as to terminate in the realization of freedom from such earthly supports as, for example, parents, friends, children, wife, etc., and to this feeling of dependence upon God is given an appropriate expression by Utpaladeva when he says: "Of what importance are others to me

(like) parents, friends, and masters as well. For me you replace all" (Utpaladeva, op.cit., 11.1; Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, op.cit., v. 75). There exists no comparison between the slave of an earthly master and the slave of God due to the fact that the former has been "conquered," whereas the latter is a "conqueror." The conquered is so subjugated by his master as would lead to the loss of freedom. And on account of the loss of freedom, people have nothing but scorn for such people. In contrast to the contempt people may be having for the slave of an earthly master, the slave of God, on the contrary, is held in high esteem, because, as Utpaladeva would have it, such a slave has "conquered the world," and so deserves to be "venerated by the universe" (ibid., 3.15).

Asceticism – The Symbol of Renunciation

The slave of God is such a person who has, as it were, killed such enemies within who are seen to be responsible in holding him in the thralldom of transmigratory becoming, which is to say: of being born again and again in this fleeting world of pain and suffering. Having conquered the inner enemies like lust, greed and anger, through the continuous practice of ascetical renunciation, the devotee accordingly is endowed with such wisdom as would lead him to the realization of complete absence of desire. Although Śiva may be seen as the perfect embodiment of supreme asceticism, yet as an ascetic he fulfills all the desires of his devotee. Thus the devotee of God is such a person who possesses such supernal spiritual qualities as, for example, renunciation, wisdom and dispassion. Each of these qualities, in their own way, help the devotee in reaching the final goal, which is total and complete knowledge of God.

It is only the devotee who, through the process of ascetical heat, offers himself as an oblation into the blazing fire of consciousness (*cidāgni*). Śiva equally offers himself to us as a divine oblation when he engages himself in such acts of sacrifice that are driven by love. The divine nature of God is actualized when Śiva emits the universe out of himself, which means that the divine love-sacrifice is enacted at the macrocosmic level through the creative actualization of the universe. However, this very divine love-

sacrifice, at the microcosmic level, outpours itself in the form of "fall of grace" (*śaktipāta*). It is through grace that Śiva penetrates the heart of the devotee, and thereby is affected the union between the two through the bond of love. It is, thus, natural for the devotee to follow the ascetic example of Śiva by offering himself as a gift (Utpaladeva, op.cit., 14.12). As a consequence of this self-offering, the devotee accordingly becomes free from the dependence on yogic or religious practices.

Renunciation as a tool of asceticism is seen to be the only effective means of leading to the state of sameness (*samatā*). It is upon the attainment of the state of sameness that the spiritual adept remains indifferent to such opposites of life as, for example, pleasure and pain, heat and cold, honour and dishonour, love and hate. It is, thus, such a devotee who alone is qualified to become the servant of God, and as the servant of God he succumbs no more to the opposites of life. Lallā graphically depicts the spiritual state of the mind of a renunciate devotee thus:

> Let him utter a thousand abuses at me,
> but, if I be innately devoted to Śiva . . . .
> Disquiet will not find abode within my heart .
>
> (George Grierson, op. cit., q. 18)

The correspondence of the state of sameness with the state of indifference to the opposites of life denotes that one should not cultivate self-love to the extent that one forgets the ultimate goal of life, which is to realize the state of loving union with God. We are accordingly asked to cultivate the needs of life to the measure they are essential for its sustenance. In this context Lallā has this to say:

> Don but such apparel as would cause the cold to flee.
> Eat but so much food as will cause hunger to cease.
> O Mind! Devote thyself to the discernment of the Self and of the Supreme,
> And recognize the body as but food for the forest crows (ibid., q.18)

Renunciation as an antidote for attachment is such a method of asceticism whereby the mind is so trained as to become immobile. It is not only the mind that is immobilized, but also the

body. This immobilization of mind-body is the fundamental goal of the meditative techniques of the yoga system which Patañjali has enunciated in the text called the *Yogasūtras*. The immobility of the body is gained by such external techniques as the bodily posture (*āsana*) and the regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*). Insofar as the arresting of the mental whirls is concerned, it is achieved through the practice of such methods as concentration and meditation. Once the body-mind is immobilized, the yogī accordingly reaches a spiritual state whereby he becomes completely indifferent to mental operations as well as to physical stimulus. Thus the peak or acme of renunciation is reached when indifference towards mental and physical environment becomes effective – and such a state is variously known as that of equipoise, non-attachment and contentment. While abiding in this state of indifference, the devotee, however, is seized only by one desire, which is to have the experience of perfect union with Paramaśiva. And Lallā expresses this desire for the union with Śiva thus:

> ... the material world dried up within me
> with the fire of love I parched my heart as a man parched the grain,
> and at that moment did I obtain Śiva (ibid., q. 25)

Upon realizing the union with Śiva, the devotee remains dead to all forms of externality, which means that he is no more conscious of himself as being an embodied existent. The devotee is so inebriated by the nectar that flows forth from this union with Śiva as to be completely free from the sense of dependence upon the body. And accordingly we are informed:

> ...the soul that is free from desire will never die.
> If, while it is yet alive, it die, then that alone is true knowledge
> (ibid., q.12)

The Symbolism of Darkness

The symbolism of darkness delineates the idea of such a condition when the soul, as it were, is engulfed by the pain of self-alienation, which in existential terms expresses itself in the form of anguish. If put in Trika philosophical language, it would mean that the

empirical soul, being limited and conditioned, is a creature of contingency (*paśutva*), and so has lost the capacity of "recognizing" (*pratyabhijñā*) himself as to who he essentially is, or, in other words, as to what constitutes one's essential nature (*svarūpa, svabhāva*). The conditioned existence of contingency or bondage comes to be on account of being veiled (*āvaraṇa*) by the impurities (*mala-s*) that are seen to be responsible in causing ignorance (*avidyā, akhyāti*) to be. It is this condition of not knowing one's essential nature as not being distinct from Paramaśiva that is what is constitutive of spiritual darkness – and the darkness seems to be the most appropriate symbol for expressing this conditioned state of existence.

Although the night may be representing darkness, and thereby ignorance, yet it is the very solitude and stillness of the night that reflects the passionate yearning of love for the Beloved, and in our case it is Śiva. It is a yearning borne out of anguish, because the soul experiences such an abandonment as if left in a parched desert where the droplets of life-giving water do not seem to be in sight. It is in such a forlorn condition that the soul yearns to meet the Beloved, so that the festival of transcendental union of identity may be celebrated.

While journeying inwardly, the mystic, through contemplation, expects to encounter Śiva in such a manner as to be illumined by the inner light of gnosis. It is this inner light that so guides the journey as to dispel the darkness of nescience. This search for, as well as encounter with, the Beloved is beautifully expressed by Lallā thus:

> I, Lallā, passed through the door of the jasmine-garden of my soul,
> And there, O Joy! I saw Śiva seated united with Śakti.
> There because I absorbed in the lake of nectar.
> Now what can (existence) do unto me?
> For, even though alive I shall be dead. (Grierson, op. cit., p.68)

The silence of the night also represents the process of purgation whereby the *sādhaka*, through contemplative praxis (*yoga-sādhanā*), causes the negation of such moral defects (*dośa*) in the soul which, in the terminology of the Trika, are given the nomenclature of

impurities (*malā-s*). It is, thus, through the mystical night that the soul progressively journeys towards its goal, and the goal is nothing else than to realize the union with Paramaśiva. The mystical night of Śiva is such a night in terms of which the *sādhaka*, through self-effacement, offers himself as an oblation in the blazing fire of consciousness, which is nothing but Paramaśiva itself. This is how Lallā makes use of the symbolism of the night as a kind of pre-requisite for self-annihilation. Utters she thus:

> The day will be extinguished, and the night will come;
> The surface of the earth will become extended to the heaven;
> On the day of new moon, the moon swallowed up the demon of eclipse.
> The illumination of the Self in the organ of thought is the true worship of Śiva. (ibid., q.22).

Lallā makes use of the symbolism of the night in such a manner as would empower her of doing away with every kind of differentiated consciousness that one encounters during the day. It is through the destruction of differentiation that there will eventuate undifferentiated unity of sky and earth, and it will come to be when the demon of ignorance is devoured upon the dawning of the new moon, which is but the symbol of supreme consciousness, namely, of Paramaśiva. The dawning of the full moon denotes the emergence of illumination at the end of the night and in terms of which the transfiguration of empirical consciousness occurs. In the silence of the night everything, thus, is so appeased as would lead to the experience of non-dual Absolute.

The silence of the night, being undifferentiated, is also linked to the "void" (*śūnya*). As and when the concept of the void is made use of by the Trika thinkers, it should not be construed that it carries the same meaning as it has for the Mādhymaka philosophy of Nāgārjuna. The concept of void in the Trika is explained in terms of unbounded "space" (*kha, vyoma*). As the characteristics of sameness constitute the nature of space, so is the divine I-consciousness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*), which is the nature of Paramaśiva. In the preliminary stages the mystic has the experience of the "void," which parallels the purification of the soul in terms of its ascension towards higher and purer forms of experience. The lower

stages of existence, as it were, are characterized by impurities, and these impurities have to be burnt in the flames of the fire of asceticism (*tapas*). The void of space also expresses the ineffable nature of Śiva, and the mystic, while ascending upwards, gives in to this ineffability of the Lord by plunging, through the mystical night of Śiva (*Śivarātrī*), into the plenitude of eternal bliss. Lallā expresses the experience of ascension in terms of her submergence into the totality of undifferentiated consciousness thus:

> There is there no word or (thought) in the mind.
> There is there no transcendent and non-transcendent.
> Not by vow of silence, not by mystic attributes, is there entry there,
> Not dwell there Śiva and his Śakti.
> If there remains somewhat that is what the doctrine teaches.
>
> (Grierson, ibid., p.2)

Some of the terms that Lallā has made use of are so ambiguous as to verge on esotericism. The term "there" should be understood as indicating the supreme, and so the transcendent implies that which is beyond the phenomenal. The phrase "vow of silence" is such a means whereby the mind of the adept has the possibility of acquiring such divine knowledge whereby union with Paramaśiva may be actualized. Likewise the term "somewhat" would mean the ineffable nature of the Absolute, because of it being beyond any kind of conceptuality.

The darkness of the night also is the symbol of such secrecy whereby the mystic, through the inviolable silence of the night, reaches the ultimate state of absorption, which is to say that everything is being devoured by "the void" in such a manner as would remain nothing except the supreme. It is a process of dissolution of all the categories (*tattvas*), which ultimately leads to the experience of the non-dual Absolute as being a mass of consciousness-bliss. This experience of the Absolute as being a mass of consciousness-bliss finds its expression in the words of Lallā:

> When the sun disappeared, then came the moonlight;
> When the moon disappeared, then only mind remained.
> When (absorbed in the infinite) mind disappeared, then naught anywhere was left;

> Then whither did earth, ether, and sky go off (absorbed) together (in vacuity). (Grierson, ibid., p. 9)

The mystic, while progressing spiritually, moves towards the goal of having the realization of union with Śiva, and in terms of which he is having experiences that could either be "sweet" or "bitter." The one who has been blessed with the experience of union with Śiva is simultaneously made to go through "the night of gaiety." Even though having enjoyed the flow of gaiety, there occur moments of anguish when the mystic seems to be going through the experience of what is called the "absence of God" (*Deus absconditus*). Utpaladeva gives expression to this experience of hide-and-seek, of presence-and-absence, in his *Śivastotrāvalī* (10.21) thus: "Even though Your presence of Great Light is permanent and evident everywhere, Lord, why then did I venture into darkness?" That which is considered by the faculty of understanding as the darkness of ignorance is for the heart bitterness caused by the anguish of absence. Thus issues forth a cry full of anguish from Utpaladeva: "For those of us who take delight in You, there is no pain, neither in the beginning, nor in the middle, nor in the end. Nevertheless, Lord, it is pain which causes us to weaken! Explain to us , how can this be so?" (Ibid., 20.13). As a result of this separation from God, there is inflicted such a wound upon the heart the pain of which is unbearable. Therefore, a prayer is offered unto the Lord that He may "fill forever the wave of its supreme nectar the gaping wounds (of the heart) that have been made by (my) ignorance of the true liberation" (ibid., 19.7). And in what lies true liberation? For a devotee true liberation is characterized by the experience of non-separation from Śiva. It is the ardent devotee of the Lord who knows the significance and meaning of pain that night symbolizes, because it is he alone who knows what "joy" is, and as a result of this knowing he "alone sees the beauty of the universe."

While the night is considered as the symbol of pain and darkness, yet it is in the night that the soul sets out on a journey that is transcendent and in terms of which are offered into the fire of consciousness all that that is not-Śiva. It is Śiva as Bhairava who, as

the all-devouring fire, consumes all the multiplicities through transcendence. When in the fire of sacrifice diverse ingredients are offered as oblations, it is thereby authenticated as to how diversity is consumed by Śiva, and it is this aspect of Śiva that is called as the "terrible" (*bhairava*). Thus says Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* (chap. 4):

> Sacrifice – the dissolution of all beings in the ardour of the fire of the supreme Lord's consciousness, a fire possessed of a yearning to devour all beings in itself and uniquely subsistent on their dissolution – is (performed) to realize in its intensity the idea that all beings are in essence the ardour of the supreme Lord Himself.

When Paramaśiva devours diversity in its entirety, there remains nothing except the Lord himself, unimpeded in its splendour, which means that, in the midst of darkness, there is neither day nor night, neither Being nor Non-Being. Only Śiva remains and nothing else. In relation to the *sādhaka* it means that, while worshipping Śiva during the mystical night of Śiva (*śivarātrī*), he offers, at the level of undifferentiated consciousness, whatever he has as an oblation to be consumed by the ardour of sacrificial fire. It also means that the worshipper of Śiva offers himself as an oblation by throwing himself into the fire of ineffable consciousness so that nothing remains but the Essence alone. This self-offering unto Śiva is expressed by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa thus:

> Even while united with the undifferentiated.... You remain undifferentiated; We bring the offering to Your Reality, the only realization of the ultimate truth. (Bhaṭṭa Nārāyana, op. cit., v. 11)

Confirming the fire-sacrifice as a means for devouring the dualized structures of diversity, Abhinavagupta speaks of fire-oblation thus:

> When in the blazing flame of consciousness he offers the pile of the greed seed, which consists in the manifoldness of inward and outward figments of thought, this is his (viz., of yogī's) fire-oblation, done with labour. (*Paramārthasāra*, v. 76).

Thus the mystical night of Śiva offers the opportunity to the yogī of re-visiting himself in terms of the effectuation of inward purification through self-offering into the blazing fire of consciousness. As a result of this there emerges such a state as would enable the yogī to make the offering of every kind of "mental duality into the luminous and blazing flames of consciousness." The mystic accordingly becomes "one with the Light." (ibid, v. 68).

There is no doubt in affirming the fact that the journey of the soul towards the Supreme Goal is hard and difficult to trudge. It is a path that is strewn with the thorns of duality, of impurity, of ignorance – and all of them are embodied by the darkness of night. It is, however, also the night that offers to the yogī the opportunity of plunging into the ineffable plenitude of the Self by offering himself as an oblation into the blazing flames of consciousness, and this self-offering as a means of realizing identity with the Supreme is afforded by what is called the mystical night of Śiva. At the end of this mystical journey is experienced the rapturous ecstasy of union of identity with Śiva, and this event is given vent by Lallā thus:

> Absorbed within Thyself, Thou remain hidden from me. The livelong day I passed seeking for "me" and "Thee." When I beheld Thee in my Self, I have to Thee and to my Self the unrestrained rapture of (our union).
>
> (Grierson, op. cit., p. 44)

The Mystical Journey

The experience of union with Śiva is not the end of the mystical journey precisely because of it being characterized by the sense of I-Thou relationship, which means that the dualistic way of thinking and perceiving has not yet been totally overcome. The union that is experienced between the individual and God is such as would posit difference between the two and in terms of which each member of the dyad see each other as being the "other." In order to overcome or transcend the mutual "otherness" means that the mystic has still to travel the painful path of what is called "the mystical night." The mystical night is a path that ultimately terminates in the experience of the ineffable Absolute (*bhairava*),

and in terms of which is opened up the door of entrance (*samāveśa*) into the ocean of bliss of consciousness (*cid-ānanda-ghana*). The entrance into the Ocean of the Divine is characterized by the delight of wonder (*camatkāra*) and amazement (*vismayatā*). The delight is so wonderful and amazing as to find no words which may express its intensity and expanse. The very entrance into the ocean of bliss denotes complete death to the natural man, which means that there occurs such deification in terms of which the mystic becomes, as it were, the divine epiphany. To be a divine epiphany would mean such perfect mergence as to be equated with the "mystical night of Śiva" (*śivarātrī*), which is experienced in terms of identity with "the Light of lights, darkness of all darknesses" (Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1; see also *Bodhapañcadaśikā*, v.1). The ineffable and radiant light of Śiva is such as would devour, through the mystical penetration, every kind of duality.

It is in the stillness and solitude of the mystical night that the soul, as it were, takes a deep plunge into the hidden life of the Self, and as the night progresses in its blazing brilliance of love, there correspondingly emerges, without the clarity of intention, in the soul desire for such knowledge about which it knows nothing. Also the soul has no understanding as to how to acquire the knowledge of the indefinable Absolute. It is in the context of this swelling urge that the following statement of Utpaladeva may be taken note of: "In a way I did not know that I had not known previously. As I acquired the nectar of your love, so I know now which I knew not before" (Utpaladeva, op.cit., 16.5). As a consequence of this, the inner conflicts and agitations cease to be. There spreads serene calm both inwardly and outwardly. The mystic accordingly plunges into Śiva, which is a process of interfusing the soul with Śiva. This interfusing is occasioned on account of the "lover adoring you perpetually, Lord, in the state of the Night of Śiva when there is not the slightest sign of light, and when the entire universe is very drowsy" (ibid., 15.18). Whether the devotee is awake or asleep, he knows that he will be awakened to non-duality by the "yogic sleep" (*yoga-nidrā*) of love. It is on account of the fervour of the will that the thought in the mind remains asleep with regard to the world. As a result of the unawareness of the

world, the ascetic-yogī plunges into the repose of love which the spiritual night entails. This "yogic sleep" does not only embody the unawareness of the world, but also is seen as a means of stripping off the thought-constructs, and thereby allowing the soul to remain absorbed in the undifferentiated Absolute, which is Maheśvara, and which means the emergence of non-dual consciousness devoid of states. What it amounts to saying is this: The heart must so empty itself as to be aware of nothing but Śiva alone. It is this pure loving awareness of Śiva that is constitutive of authentic mystical asceticism.

In order to make the image of the "night" more meaningful, there is another image that the Trika mystics have made use of, which is that of a "cavern." Like the night, the cavern is bottomless, and so ineffable. It is an image in terms of which the mystic desires to sink deep down into the bottomless ocean, which is Śiva, represented by the cavern. This cavern, though hidden and concealed, is cognized when the brilliance of the Supreme Light causes the destruction of the darkness of ignorance within and without. This is how Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa gives expression to this aspect of mystical experience:

> O that we may see your interior cavern,
> enchanting and profound, in darkness,
> dissipated on all sides by the Brightness Supreme
> (op.cit., v.12).

As to why the image of "cavern" is made use of is because the mystic desires to explore the unexplored depths of existence. It is so because it is in the darkness of the cavern of the heart where Śiva resides. Hidden and concealed, the blind men of ignorance, who have been blinded by the darkness of duality, have no inclination to find out as to where Śiva resides. In contrast to the men of ignorance, the mystic perceives Śiva within the interior of his being through the light of the torch of unity. It is such a light as would consume psycho-physical construct, called ego, by offering it as an oblation into the blazing flames of sacrificial fire. It is only the hero (*vīra*) who possesses the courage and boldness of plunging directly into the cavern of the heart. The mystic does so for the

purification of the heart from the latent residues (*vāsanā-s*), from thought as well as from memory. Upon purifying the heart from the active and latent drives, the mystic accordingly is so empowered as to attain the naked state of will of the undifferentiated consciousness – and it is this consciousness that serves as the substratum of memory, intelligence and sensibility. Once the cavern of the heart is purified from its active and latent drives, or what may be called from the fluids of impurity (*saṁskāra-s*), there correspondingly emerges the unbounded capacity in the form of energy that is unimpeded and unrestricted. The emergence of energy is actualized when the interior of the cavern is illuminated by the divine splendour (ibid., v. 29). Accordingly the mystic has the experience of the cavern as manifesting itself as the very "essence of the cosmos."

The Night as the Symbol of Pain

It is, no doubt, that the mystic attains, through the mystical night, the state of perfect unity with Śiva. The attainment of this state of unity, however, is not so easy as to be free from the thorns and thistles that one faces while trudging the trajectory of spiritual path. The progress of the mystic towards spiritual illumination is determined to what extent his love for Śiva has become pure and unalloyed, which means to what measure the mystic has been able of burning, in the blazing furnace of love, the latent and active residues in the mind. While the night could be sweet for the mystic who is blessed with the Beatific Vision, it could, however, leave bitter taste in the mouth of those mystics who only have the experience of painful separation. There are some mystics who initially enjoy the sweet taste of divine presence, but also have the probability of experiencing such oppressive moments which emerge when they feel deprived of the supernal joy that was experienced initially. Utpaladeva has beautifully expressed this come-and-go type of experience thus: "Even though the essence of your great Light is permanent and evident everywhere, Lord, why did I then venture into darkness?" (Utpaladeva, op. cit., 10.21).

The darkness of night, when looked at from the epistemic point of view, denotes ignorance. When ignorance is spoken of, it does not mean the absence of knowledge (*jñāna-abhāva*). Ignorance,

within the Trika framework, denote imperfect/incomplete knowledge (*apūrṇa-khyāti*), which means that it is knowledge that is basically erroneous concerning the essential nature of Paramaśiva. For the Trika mystic the erroneous knowledge is that which is characterized by dualistic thinking and in terms of which is experienced an unbridgeable gape between the individual being and Śiva. Ignorance, thus, would basically mean deprivation of such knowledge which is constitutive of undifferentiated unity. But the darkness of ignorance, when looked at from the perspective of feeling, symbolizes bitterness of the heart. It is so because the density of darkness is such as would result in the deprivation of the experience of illuminative knowledge or presence of the Lord. It could also mean such separation as is oppressive and painful. Thus for a mystic there is no greater pain than to experience separation from the Beloved. Accordingly pain for the mystic is separation, whereas perfect union with Śiva denote the ecstatic joy that is unbounded (ibid., 13.1). Thus the mystic, due to this separation, feels wounded in the heart. And the wounds of separation are inflicted upon the heart on account of the fact that the mystic seems to have lost the direction on the way to divine non-dual unity. Thus cries the mystic prayerfully:

> When will your essence, Lord, reveal itself at the precise moment when one contemplates upon it,
> Fill forever with the wave of its supreme ambrosia, the gaping wounds made by (my) ignorance of true liberation (ibid., 19.7).

Such devotees who have experienced the ecstasy of love know the extent of pain that separation from the Beloved causes. Thus for such mystics the torment of the darkness of the night becomes the breeding-ground for the search for meaning, because it is they alone who enjoy as well as suffer upon "seeing the beauty of the universe." As the mystic advances in his mystical quest, so does the extent of suffering become deeper and larger. Initially he is afflicted by his own imperfections, and as he progresses in the path of the divine knowledge, he has to cross over many impediments that his own shortcomings may give rise to. Lallā, while making use of the metaphor of cotton-pod, describes this painful journey thus:

I, Lallā, went forth in the hope of (blooming like) a cotton-flower.
Many a kick did the cleaner and the carder give me.
Gossamer made from me did the spinning woman lift from the wheel,
And a hanging kick did I receive in the weaver's workroom.
When the washerman dashed me on the washing-stone,
He rubbed me with fuller's earth and soap.
When the tailor worked his scissors on me, piece by piece,
Then did I, Lallā, obtain the way of the Supreme.

(Grierson, op.cit., qs. 102-03)

While the mystic struggles against the odds of life, he seems to be experiencing only failures and spiritual disappointments. Every spiritual endeavour or exertion ends in such a failure as would terminate in utter despair. The mystic experiences such an inward aridity as is discovered in a desert. As a result of this inner aridity, the mystic thinks that God does not reveal to him his luminous essence on account of subtle impurity that still exists within him (cf. Utpaladeva, op.cit., 13.2). It is a situation which Lallā depicts graphically in this manner:

With a rope of untwisted thread I am towing on a boat upon the ocean.
When will my God hear? Will He carry me even ever?
Like water in goblet of unbaked clay, do I slowly waste away.
My soul is in a dizzy whirl. Fain would I reach my home.

(Grierson, op. cit., q. 106)

It is such a bewildering situation in which the soul of the mystic does not know which way he should trudge upon. He is still, on the one hand, caught up with the pleasures of the senses and, on the other hand, desires to bridge the abyss of separation by igniting the torch of love within. The mystic, therefore, finds himself suspended in a supportless vacuum. As a result of this suspension he silently suffers from his yearning for the vision of Śiva. He wants to remain permanently in the quietude of Śiva's sweet embrace. In the midst of this bewilderment, he discovers that love alone has the power and capacity to pacify the pangs of pain he is experiencing. He realizes that he will find release from the pain of separation only if he seeks help from, and takes refuge in, Śiva. Thus he has to awaken the consciousness of Śiva from within the

secret cavern of his own heart. As a result of this, the mystic ultimately finds out that his anguished cry is being heard when he has the experience of illumination within:

> Absorbed within Thyself, Thou remains hidden from me.
> The livelong day I passed seeking for "me" and "Thee."
> When I beheld Thee in my Self,
> I have to Thee and to my Self unrestrained rapture of (our union) (ibid., q.44).

The Conquest of Love

The devotee of God, while travelling the spiritual trajectory of devotion, gives preference to the path of love over against the path of knowledge or yoga. Although the aim of both these paths is to reach the soteriological goal of liberation, yet it is the path of love that attracts the devotee on account of it being sprinkled by the nectarine droplets of immortal bliss. The devotee constantly and continuously implores God for the descent of such divine grace as would become the cause for the destruction of inward darkness, and thereby of transmigratory becoming (Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, op. cit., v. 58). For a devotee mere knowledge does not seem to have the capacity of penetrating the dark cavern of ignorance unless it is transformed into the living flame of love. It is such a flame of love that alone has the power of devouring the transmigratory becoming by purifying the heart from the residual impurities. As the flames of fire purify the gold from the accrued impurities, likewise does the loving flame of spirit destroy the impurities that are seen to be the cause of phenomenal becoming. Since the taste of love for the devotee is extremely sweet and spiritually edifying, so the gnostic illumination seems to him to be nothing else than the sour liquid (Utpaladeva, op. cit., 1.11)

The role of love in the life of a devotee is such as would terminate in the stabilization of the path of illumination. It is on account of love that both the dispositions of quietude and intensity are so activated in the devotee as would result in the initiation of such a movement that is necessary for the realization of illumination. Thus declares Utpaladeva:

Even though your Essence may be inconceivable, (which means) beyond (the sphere of) contemplation, (yet) it discloses itself to such (devotees) who love you as soon as they begin to contemplate (ibid., 20.19).

The above words of Utpaladeva make it clear that the devotee is immediately thrown, as it were, into the ocean of love the moment he begins to contemplate on Śiva. While bathing in the ocean of love, the heart of the mystic is seized by such light as would terminate in the realization of peace and joy. While experiencing the intoxicating ecstasy and madness, he at the same time has the experience of drowsiness, of sleep and quietude. As a result of such experiences, he remains completely oblivious of all that that is external. It is at this stage of experience that the mystic is so immersed in God as to be participating in the divine life of God itself. "The one who knows (as to) how to taste the ambrosia of love (as well as) how to bathe in its delights is the greatest of all bliss ... ." (ibid., 16.17).

To the measure the sensibility of the mystic is refined, to that measure love attains the primordial simplicity, which means that as he progressively immerses from one void into another, he accordingly abandons his will to the extent that he feels nothing, knows nothing, and loves nothing. Ultimately he reaches the Center, which is the Self, where the blazing flames of love consume all forms of duality by offering them as oblations to the awful fire of consciousness. Consequently he experiences inner contentment in terms of the fulfillment of the heart, and accordingly attains perfect harmony between the Self and the universe. Upon the divinization of sense faculties, he experiences the Self as being immense and unbounded, and in terms of which he realizes his perfect identity with Paramaśiva. Thus he attains the mystical state where love, in its true majesty and glory, conquers everything. Thus the saint shares the bounty of love with everyone as a result of his being steeped in the plenitude of grace.

2

Verses of Stvacintāmaṇi

सुगिरा चित्तहारिण्या पश्यन्त्या दृश्यमानया।
जयत्युल्लासितानन्द महिमा परमेश्वरः॥१॥

1. **sugirā cittahāriṇyā paśyantyā dṛśyamānayā/**
jayatyullāsitānanda-mahimā parameśvaraḥ//

Trs.: Ever victorious be such Supreme Lord whose glory, in the form of supreme bliss, (which is to say as *parāvāk*: universal consciousness), shines visibly in terms of *paśyanti* speech, (and accordingly) quietens the mind (and thereby also the vital airs, which is the place of repose for *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*), and so exceeds the excellence both of *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*.

Comment: This verse explains the standpoint of Trika Śaivism concerning the metaphysical significance of language. The metaphysical standpoint of Trika Śaivism concerning language can properly be understood and appreciated only in relation to "the levels of speech" which the Grammarian School of Bhartṛhari has expounded. Bhartṛhari, while expounding the theory of language, maintains that speech, from the highest to the lowest, is characterized by three levels, which he labels as the "seeing" (*paśyanti*), the "middling" (*madhyamā*), and the "articulate" (*vaikharī*). Somānanda, the founder of Pratyabhijñā School, criticizes Bhartṛhari for upholding the *seeing* level of speech as being the highest and the most subtle form of speech. As the founder and enunciator of the philosophy of *pratyabhijñā*, Somānanda, while accepting the three levels of speech of the

Grammarians, adds one more, namely, the transcendent (*parā*) level, thereby making the levels of speech fourfold.

It would not be out of place to point out as to why Somānanda is very critical concerning the Grammarian view of the levels of speech. The Trika Śaivas as well as the Grammarians hold identical views with regard to the Absolute as being identical with Freedom (*svātantrya*). The Trika Śaivas do not accept the Grammarian view of the Absolute as being identical with the *seeing* level of speech, which it terms as Word-Absolute (*śabda brahman*). For Somānanda the *seeing* level of speech is not such as would represent the Absolute, because the Absolute is such a transcendent, and thereby non-dual, category as would not admit any kind of multiplicity within itself. It would mean that the Absolute embodies such a transcendent state as would not allow any kind of distinction to exist between the subject and the object. There is complete absence of temporal succession in the Absolute on account of it being transcendent to space-time processes (cf. *Śivadṛṣṭi,* 5.45). Insofar as the *seeing* level of speech of the Grammarians is concerned, it is, according to Somānanda, not more than the power of knowledge, which is equated with the Sadāśiva category. For Somānanda the highest aspect of speech is *parā*, which the Grammarians did not postulate in their over-all metaphysical scheme. The Trika Śaivas, while admitting the *parā* as the highest aspect of speech, have expressed their viewpoint in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* of Utpaladeva thus: *citiḥ-pratyavamarśātmā-parāvāk-svarasodita,svātantrayametanmukhyaṃ-tadaiśvarayaṃ-paramātmanaḥ.*

The reason that Somānanda rejects the Grammarian viewpoint concerning the *paśyanti* as being the highest form of speech is the following. The term *paśyanti*, according to Somānanda, is derived from the root *dṛṣ* with the affix *śatṛ*, meaning thereby *the act of seeing* that is relational occurring in the present time. As a transitive verb, it denotes such a form of action that has to be related to an object. If the "act of seeing" of the Grammarian is accepted as the highest form of speech, then the question, according to Somānanda, may be asked concerning the nature of the object to which the "act of seeing" is related. It cannot *a priori* be assumed that the "act of seeing" is related to an external object on the

ground that all the external objects, according to the Grammarians, are a false appearance (*vivarta*). It would mean that the highest form of speech (*parā-vāk*) can have no relation with objects that are assumed to be false. Were we to agree with the suggestion of the Grammarians that the "act of seeing" is related to the external object that is unreal, then it would mean that the "act of seeing" itself is false? It is also assumed by the Grammarians that the *paśyanti* level of speech is completely devoid of duality, and if it is so, then it is illogical to maintain that the non-dual *paśyanti* is related to the external objectivity. It would also be wrong to assert that the "act of seeing" relates itself to the external object on account of ignorance. In such a situation it would be natural to ask as to whether ignorance is real or unreal. If ignorance is accepted as being real, then the very *locus standi* for the non-dual Absolute vanishes. If ignorance, on the other hand, is relegated to the realm of unreality, then the *paśyanti-vāk* and ignorance would have no possibility to exist simultaneously. Why is it so? It is so because ignorance is said to be a non-existent entity. In this manner we would be imputing unreality upon the *brahman* of the Grammarians. Also the argument that the *paśyanti* first gives rise to an object and, upon giving rise to it, sees it would be as fallacious an argument as would be the search for a sky-flower. It is logically not possible for a real *paśyanti* to give rise to a fictitious object. The question that may arise in this context would be: Did *paśyanti*, prior to the emergence of the object, know the object or not? Factually it is not possible to have a perception of an object prior to its emergence. If the object, prior to its emergence, is not known to *paśyanti*, then the emanation of an unknown object is not in consonance with the philosophy of Grammar. In this manner the Trika concept of *parā* seems to have evolved from the criticism of the Grammarians concerning the nature of the highest form of speech.

For Somānanda, and thereby for the Pratyabhijñā, the concept of *parā-vāk* is so conceived as would transcend the Grammarian concept of *paśyanti*. The concept of *parā*, in the Pratyabhijñā system, is equated with the cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*), which, as the highest aspect of speech, is transcendent to *paśyanti*. It is

through the power of cognitive self-awareness that we are so enabled as to make a necessary distinction between the sentient and the insentient. It is this power of awareness that enables as well as empowers us to differentiate the self-luminous subject from the luminosity of an object like that of a lamp or a diamond. The power of awareness is termed as *vāk* precisely because it is through the inner and indeterminate sound that the universe is apprehended. It should be quite clear now that the *parā* in the Trika is not seen, as is the case with the Grammarians, to be identical with *brahman*. It is, rather, viewed as the highest aspect of *brahman*. *Brahman* in the Pratyabhijñā is not treated as a pure unity, but is considered as unity of light (*prakāśa*) and cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*). The essential nature of the Absolute, thus, is explained in terms of light of consciousness and cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*).

It is an *a priori* thinking of theTrika Śaivas that speech, both at the level of thought and uttered speech, is the source of revelation, and it is through this revealing aspect of speech that we are so empowered as to have cognitive knowledge not only of phenomena, but of that which, from a metaphysical point of view, may be considered to be beyond the phenomena. The primordial *vāk* is seen to be possessing this revelatory power of cognition on account of it having its source in what may be called the "imperishable consciousness." Consciousness, according to the Trika system, is not only considered as being luminous, but equally is seen to be of the nature of cognitive awareness. Prior to the emergence of Trika Śaivism, this metaphysical view of language as being revelatory is to be found in the Vedic system of thought when we are, for example, informed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that it is through speech that the universe has come into being. While considering the speech, whether articulate or inarticulate, as being the source of the manifest world, the Upaniṣads accordingly have no hesitation in identifying the unspoken speech, in the form of *nāda*, with *brahman* (see *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.1.2).

Insofar as the fourfold division of *vāk* is concerned, it is to be found in the *Ṛigveda* (1.164.45) itself, and Somānanda, while giving shape to the philosophy of language, follows verbatim the dictum

of the tradition as formulated by the Vedic thought. Even Patañjali seems to be following this fourfold division when he classifies language as consisting of the *noun* (*nāma*), the *verb* (*akhyāta*), the *suffix* (*upasarga*) and the *indeclinables* (*nipāta*). Within the Āgamic/ Tāntric context this fourfold division of speech is given the nomenclature of "the transcendent" (*parā*), "the seeing" (*paśyanti*), "the middling" (*madhyamā*), and "the articulate" (*vaikhārī*). The concept of speech, within the Tāntric formulation, has been dealt with from the perspectives of dualism (*bhedavāda*), represented by Śaiva Siddhānta, and from that of non-dualism (*abhedavāda*), represented by Trika Śaivism. The dualistic form of interpretation of speech is well presented by Śrīkaṇṭha in his *Ratnatraya*. He classifies the four stages of speech by equating the *parā* with what he calls *sukṣma*, which is said to be identical with the inarticulate speech, namely, *nāda*. Insofar as the *paśyanti* stage of speech is concerned, it is equated with *akṣarabindu*. The *madhyamā* stage is seen to be representing such mental images which are depicted in the form of successive letters that are seen to be constitutive of the word. The *vaikharī* stage of speech emerges when the activity of the vital air begins. It is through the operation of the tongue, for example, that speech takes gross form. It is in its gross form that speech becomes audible. There is, thus, the descent of the *vāk* from the state of *parā*, via *paśyanti* and *madhyamā*, to that of gross audible speech, represented by *vaikharī*. The Śaiva Siddhāntins, however, are of the view that the *parā* and the other stages of the *vāk* are nothing but the evolutes of *mahāmāyā/bindu*, which is seen as embodying the insentient principle, which would mean that the *parā* is the embodiment of the insentient.

For the Trika Śaiva the essential nature (*svabhāva*) of the Absolute (*anuttara*) is seen to be consisting of two aspects, namely, light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and congnitive awareness (*vimarśa*). Accordingly the manifest universe is said to be constituted by what is called "substance" and "speech", which is to say: by *vācya* and *vācaka*. The grossest manifestation of the Absolute as *prakāśa* is the substance, whereas it is the gross speech that embodies *vimarśa*. The twofold division of the Word as being the *vācya* and *vācaka* may be taken into consideration in the context the four stages of

ascent and descent of the Word. The Absolute is referred to as the Supreme Word (*parāvāk*) at that point of time when the emphasis has to be laid upon its cognitive aspect (*vimarśamyatā*). The *parā* is said to be as subtle as is the self-awareness. It embodies the non-dual state of unity of the absolute consciousness. The transcendent state of the Word is such as to be totally devoid of the limitations of space-time (*deśa-kāla*), which means that it is completely free from the faintest stirrings of diversity. It is a state of the absolute Word that represents the undifferentiated status of all the words and their respective meanings. It embodies the "free will" (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute, and accordingly so is envisioned as to represent the blissful state of Śiva and Śakti.

Insofar as the "seeing state" (*paśyanti-daśā*) of the Word is concerned, it proceeds from the *parā* when there occurs descent downwards towards gross manifestation. It represents the first movement of the Word towards the manifestation of the gross speech. It is such a movement that is responsible in causing such stirrings within the Word as would ultimately lead to the emergence of gross speech. The stirring, however, is not so visible as would lead to such differentiation that could be perceived. It would mean that the sense of difference, at the level of *paśyanti,* is not at all perceptible. There is no hiatus of difference existing at this stage between the word and its meaning. At this stage the Word is so unified as would not lead to its splitting into letters. The *paśyanti* is a state which, in the words of Somānanda, embodies the causal aspect of the word and its meaning, which means that there has not yet eventuated a formal split in the undifferentiated unity of the Word. After the *paśyanti* state, upon the scale of the descent of the Word, is the "middling" (*madhyamā*) stage, which is the penultimate state, in terms of its precedence, of the "articulate speech" (*vaikharī*). At this stage a formal kind of breach occurs between the word (*śabda*) and its meaning (*artha*), even though their substratum may be identical. The motion that is represented by the *madhyamā*, in contrast to the general motion of *paśyanti,* is specific or what may be termed as being particular. It is at this stage that, through the process of succession, the letters become distinct, which previously at the *paśyanti* level were non-distinct. It is through the process of succession that such mental images eventuate which

are considered to be constitutive of the word. The state of *madhyamā* may be compared to the mental alertness that is needed prior to delivering a lecture to an audience of scholars. This mental alertness ultimately terminates in the delivery of speech in terms of its articulation. It is through the articulate form of speech (*vaikharī*) that the activities of life are conducted in the world. It is because of its grossness that the articulate speech gains the capacity of being audible, whereas at the other three preceding levels of speech, being subtle, it is inaudible. Since this state represents difference, so it is natural, at this level, to discover the existence of distinction between the word and its meaning. Also there occurs a correspondence between the descent of the Word and the powers of will, knowledge and action. Accordingly we are informed that the transcendent state of the word (*parā*), as it were, represents the ever-readiness (*aunmukhyatā*) of the power of will (*icchā-śaktī*) as well as the readiness for the operation of the "will power." Insofar as the middling state (*madhyamā-avasthā*) is concerned, it represents the operation of the "power of knowledge" (*jñāna-śaktī*) as well as the readiness for the operation of the "power action" (*kriyā-śakti*), which is put into motion at the level of "spoken speech" (*vaikharī*). It is, however, at the level of "spoken speech" that the "power of action" is put into operation.

[Note: The term *parameśvaraḥ* in the verse, according to Kṣemarāja, also refers to the grandfather of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa].

यः स्फीतः श्रीदयाबोधपरमानन्दसंपदा।
विद्योद्योतितमाहात्म्यः स जयत्यपराजितः॥२॥

2. yah sphītaḥ śrīdāyabodha-
paramānanda-saṁpadā/
vidyoddyotita-māhātmyaḥ
sa jayatyaparājitaḥ //

Trs.: Victory be to the unvanquished (Śiva) who is endowed with (such) a (pentad) of powers as consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action, and who (accordingly) discloses his (divine) splendour (through the power) of knowledge.

Comment: The verse encapsulates the Trika conception of the Absolute as consisting of five innate powers, namely, consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*). Consciousness and bliss should not be seen as embodying the divine powers of the Lord. They, instead, constitute the essential nature (*svabhāva, svarūpa*) of the Absolute, which is to say that the Absolute as consciousness is not simply light (*prakāśa*), but is also reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) in terms of which the divine delight is experienced as I-consciousness. It is as the light of consciousness that the Absolute manifests the objective universe. Were the Absolute to be devoid of luminosity, then nothing would exist, as everything would be enveloped by the darkness of negation. Moreover, the world appears to be existing precisely because of the bliss of the Lord. Were the Lord to be devoid of bliss, then there would be no surging, within the Lord, towards manifestation. It is the spilling over of the bliss that is the main cause for the emanation (*sṛṣṭi*) or emission (*visarga*) of objectivity. Bliss, accordingly, envisages the essential nature of the Lord, which a yogī, through the process of immersion (*samāveśa*), experiences in terms of what is called divine delight of I-consciousness. Insofar as the power of will (*icchā-śakti*) is concerned, it embodies the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute. It is through the absolute will (*svecchā*) that the Lord accomplishes things that usually are categorized as being "impossible," which is to say that the cause of the emanation of the universe is nothing else than the supreme will of the Lord. It also denotes that the Lord is so independent as to be dependent on nothing. It is because of this reason that the Lord, while giving rise to objectivity, is not dependent on external materials, as is, for example, a potter on clay while fashioning the clay-pots. Insofar as the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*) of the Lord is concerned, it is beyond the influence of *māyā*, and so is free from the darkness of dualism, which is the bane of empirical forms of knowledge. The knowledge that is referred to here is completely free from the deluding factors of *māyā*, which are seen to be the cause for the emergence of impure knowledge. A knowledge that is free from the limiting factors of *māyā* is known as pure knowledge. It is through the power of cognition that knowledge is given rise to. Knowledge as light of consciousness reveals itself

when it is reflected upon, and that is why in Trika Śaivism consciousness is said to be consisting of luminosity and cognitive awareness. Lastly, the power of action (*kriyā-śakti*) contrasts the Trika Absolute from the peaceful Absolute of Śaṁkara, which means that the Trika view of the Absolute is characterized by divine throb (*spanda*). The Absolute of the Trika is not so inert as to be actionless (*niṣkriya*). In the Trika system the Absolute is seen to be endowed with freedom (*svātantrya*), and it is through the operation of will that freedom is actualized. Since the Absolute is viewed as being characterized by the divine delight of I-consciousness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*), so it is within such a conceptual framework that we have an Absolute that is said to be the embodiment of compassion (*dayā*), consciousness (*bodha*), and transcendent bliss (*paramānanda*). As the ocean of consciousness, supreme bliss and compassion, Paramaśiva accordingly is seen to be brimming over with the infinite grace which he showers upon his devotees exuberantly. It is through the divine act of grace that the Lord reveals himself as being nothing else than mercy.

[Note: The term *aparājita* refers to the father of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, whereas *śrīdayā* is his mother].

प्रसरद्बिन्दुनादाय शुद्धामृतमयात्मने।
नमोऽनन्तप्रकाशाय शङ्करक्षीरसिन्धवे॥३॥

3. **prasarad-bindu-nādāya**
śuddhāmṛtamayātmane/
namo'nanta-prakāśāya
śaṁkara-kṣīra-sindhave//

Trs.: Homage unto Śaṁkara, who is (identical) with the milk-ocean, and from whom proceed both *bindu* (concentrated dot) and *nāda* (inarticulate sound), and who (at the same time) is of the nature of pure nectarine bliss, which is (characterized) by the infinitude of light.

Comment: It is *a priori* assumed by the Trika Śaivas that the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of the Absolute, or what in theological terms is

called Paramaśiva, is characterized by a mass of consciousness and bliss (*cid-ghana-ānanda*), and this consciousness inherently consists not only of light (*prakāśa*), but also of reflective awareness (*vimarśa*). Consciousness as light should not be equated to the light of the sun, the lamp, or to the glow of a diamond. The sun, the lamp and the diamond are basically insentient (*jaḍa*), which is to say that none of them have the capacity or power of knowing themselves as being possessed of light. As insentient items, they are destitute of self-awareness (*nirvimarśa*). In contrast to these insentient items, the supreme consciousness not only is luminous, but is also of the nature of cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*), which, in other words, means that consciousness, unlike the lamp or the sun, knows that it is inherently of the nature of luminosity. It is this self-awareness of consciousness as light that distinguishes the Absolute of the Trika from the inactive (*śānta*) *brahman* of Śaṁkara. Since Paramaśiva is both light of consciousness (*prakāśamayī*) as well as self-conscious (*vimarśamayī*), so it would mean that the conception of the Absolute has to be such as would be palpitating with divine throb (*spandanaṃ*). If the Absolute, for the sake of an argument, is viewed as being devoid of "throb," then it would be deprived of the power of self-awareness. Being self-awareness, the Absolute as I-consciousness is accordingly equated with the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*), which is encapsulated by the "power of will" (*icchā-śakti*).

Also such terms like *nāda* and *bindu* have been used in the verse. In the *śāmbhava-upāya*, *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* correspond to *bindu* and *nāda* respectively, whereas in the *śākta-upāya* it is knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*) that respectively correspond to *bindu* and *nāda*. In the context of the *āṇava-upāya* the inhaling breath (*prāṇa*) is considered to be corresponding to *bindu*, whereas exhaling breath (*apāna*) is viewed to be representing *nāda*. Thus prostration is offered to such Paramaśiva who is not only seen to be the perfect embodiment of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*, and *bindu* and *nāda*, but at the practical level of spirituality is envisioned as being such a milky-ocean that is nectarine in nature, which means that by drowning in this immortal milky-ocean one accordingly attains to such immortal spiritual state which brims over with the luminous light and bliss of consciousness.

The terms like *nāda* and *bindu* have profusely been used in the context of such philosophical standpoints that would adhere to the philosophy of grammar, mantra and music. Insofar as theTrika Śaivism is concerned, it has derived its understanding of these concepts from such scriptures as the Āgamas/Tantras. The Trika Śaivism adheres to such a notion of non-dualism in terms of which is delineated the idea of the Absolute as being the pure unity of light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*), and self-awareness as I-consciousness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*) is equated with the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*). Since it is through light that everything gains the capacity of being manifest, so the light of consciousness is accordingly identified with knowledge, which inherently is of the nature of revelation. The revelatory nature of knowledge is actualized through cognitive awareness, which corresponds to action. Accordingly *vimarśa* is seen to be the essence of *prakāśa*. At the transcendent level of reality the powers of knowledge and action are seen to be nothing else than the expression of *vimarśa*. *Nāda,* according to Abhinavagupta, is said to be identical with the *vimarśa* aspect of the Absolute, and so such concepts as, for example, *vimarśa, svātantrya, parāvāk, spanda* are seen to be synonymous, and thereby identical, which means that they represent the same aspect of the Absolute from different standpoints. It is, thus, the *vimarśa* aspect of the Absolute that is seen to be the source of all kinds of sounds, whether articulate or inarticulate, alphabetical or musical. Representing the perfect unitary state of all sounds, it thereby expresses such subtlest aspect which is seen to be the source of all forms of gross sound. It is this very *vimarśa* that expresses itself through the three descending states of the Word, and the states are the *paśyanti, madhyamā,* and *vaikharī*. While expressing itself through these descending states, there occurs a gradual differentiation between the word (*śabda*) and its meaning (*artha*).

As *nāda* is seen to be identical with *vimarśa* aspect, so is *bindu* identified with the *prakāśa* aspect of the Absolute. The *parāvāk,* according to Trika Śaivism, is divided into what may be called the subject and the object. It is *vimarśa/nāda* that is seen to be predominant when the manifestation of the Word as the subject occurs, whereas it is *prakāśa/bindu* that is predominant when the

manifestation of the object eventuates. At the transcendental level both *nāda* and *bindu* are said to be identical, and so embody the state that is non-manifest. In relation to their manifest, and thereby differentiating state, *nāda* and *bindu* are referred to as *parānāda* and *parābindu* respectively. The process of differentiation in *nāda* and *bindu* is initiated by the "free will" of the Lord. The two aspects of the Absolute as Śiva and Śakti, *nāda* and *bindu, prakāśa* and *vimarśa* as a couple, in the form of Śivatattva and Śaktitattva, are seen to be responsible for the emanation of objectivity. It is *nāda,* which corresponds to *spanda,* that is responsible in giving rise to the stir for the emission of the universe within the Divine Couple, namely, Śiva and Śakti. Insofar as *bindu* is concerned, it denotes the "swollen condition" (*ucchūnāvasthā*) of *nāda.* It is this swollenness within *nāda* that determines the readiness of Śiva-Śakti for the creative act of emission. *Nāda* and *bindu,* thus, represent such a state of Śakti which denotes the inclination towards the manifestation of the universe.

The concept of *nāda* has been assigned a very important role in relation to the theory of *mantra.* Both *nāda* and *bindu* enjoy the same status in the doctrine of *mantra* which is enjoyed by the Sadāśiva and Īśvara categories in the context manifestation. The perception of the universe (*idaṃ)* at the level of Sadāśiva (=*nāda)* is incipient, unclear and nebulous, which means that the sense of difference at this level of experience does not exist. It is at the level of Īśvara that the idea concerning the objectivity becomes quite clear, in that the sense of I-ness (*ahaṁ*) and thisness (*idaṃ*) is balanced. At both levels, objectivity is not experienced as being separate from subjectivity; rather they are seen to be identical. It is, however, the category of Īśvara (=*bindu*) that is seen to be the immediate cause of the universe that consists of name and form (*nāma-rūpa*). *Bindu* within the formulation of *mantra* doctrine is identified with the *śabda brahman,* which, according to the philosophy of Grammar, embodies the highest reality.

Also the concept of "sound" (*nāda*) is used as a yogic technique for the purpose of meditative interiorization. Technically this form of yogic meditation is known as the "yoga of sound" (*nāda-yoga*), and the basis of this form of yoga is characterized by an orientation

in which meditation on the syllable *Oṁ* is given the primary importance. It is believed that constant concentrative meditation on the syllable *Oṁ* not only results in the experience of *brahman* (*Maitrayāṇīya Upaniṣad,* 6. 24; 6.5), but also leads to the experience of freedom from the fetters of bondage (ibid., 6.22). The process of meditation is explained in this manner: "Thus because (the yogī) joins the life-force, the syllable *Oṁ* and all the manifold (phenomena of the universe), are joined (by them) – therefore this is called yoga. The singleness of the life-force, the mind and the senses and the abandonment of all levels-of-existence is called yoga (ibid., 6.25)." It is an attempt to explain the method of meditation in terms of the "word" and the "non-word." Equal importance is given to both forms of meditation, and thereby is shown the influence of the auditory form of mystical experience, which is explained in the following manner: "By closing the ears with the thumbs, they hear the sound of the space within the heart. Of this there is this sevenfold comparison: like rivers, a bell, a brass vessel, a wheel, the croaking of frogs, rain and when one speaks in a sheltered place. Passing beyond the various characteristics of *śabda-brahman,* men disappear in the Supreme, the non-sound, the unmanifest *brahman.* There they are unqualified, indistinguishable, like the various juices which have reached the condition of honey" (ibid., 6.24).

द्विष्मस्त्वां त्वां स्तुमस्तुभ्यं मन्त्रयामोऽम्बिकापते।
अतिवाल्लभ्यतः साधु विश्वड्नो धृतवानसि॥४॥

4. **dviṣmastvām tvām stumastubhyaṁ**
mantrayāmo'mbikāpate/
ativāllabhyataḥ sādhu
viśvaṅno dhṛtavānasi//

Trs.: O, the Lord of Ambikā (who is the supreme mother of us all)! On account of the intense affection that we have for you, you have (accordingly filled us with the sense) of gratitude in every respect. And at the same time it is you (alone) whom we hate, invoke and revere (simultaneously).

Comment: The use of the term *ativāllabhya* expresses the sentiment of such a form of affection which is extreme and forceful in its intensity, and as a reaction to such a form of love, there evidently would be the loving response from the one who is being showered upon with the flowers of love. Thus love/affection, whatever its form, has to be mutual, which means that both the lover and the loved must, in some way, respond to each other's love in terms of addressability and availability. The response that we should be having for the loving kindness of the Lord must equally be in terms of love. This love of the Lord is contrasted with hate, and so, empirically speaking, there will always remain the interplay between what we love and what we hate. Hate as an opposite of love will exist to the extent that we remain subservient to the residual drives and desires that dominate our mind, and it is this instinctual desire, in the form of ignorance, that becomes the cause of hate, or should we say that hate exists on account of the absence of love in the life of an individual. It could equally be said that the pair of opposites like love and hate has the possibility of exiting till the time differentiating thought-constructs are allowed, on account of ignorance, to operate in our day-to-day life. Once the entire objectivity, which is characterized by difference, is recognized as being the emission of the Lord, there will evidently ensue such realization as would lead to the experience of non-difference and in terms of which objectivity merges completely into subjectivity. Upon such realization the opposites will automatically vanish from the realm of experience at a higher level of spirituality. The best way to overcome the opposite of love, namely, hate, is to realize that the manifest is nothing but the expression of divine epiphany. Seeing the presence of the Lord everywhere, the perception of the individual being will automatically be permeated by the non-differentiating presence of the Lord.

संहृतस्पर्शयोगाय संपूर्णामृतसूतये।
वियन्मायास्वरूपाय विभवे शंभवे नमः॥५॥

5. **saṁhṛta-sparśa-yogāya**
sampūrṇāmṛta-sūtaye/

viyan-māyā-svarūpāya
vibhave śambhave namaḥ//

Trs.: Salutation to the all-pervading Śambhu who has eliminated attachment towards the (sense-) objects, who has completely destroyed the (nescient) nature of Māyā, and who projects the perfect nectarine bliss (for the devotees).

Comment: Two contrasting images are so made use of in describing the nature/character of the Lord. The Lord, on the one hand, is said to have destroyed the capacity of attraction of the senses for the sense objects, and it is indicated when it is asserted that the Lord is beyond the forms of touch. The senses, in contrast to the transcendence of the Divine, become the source of pleasure only when they come in contact with the objects out there. It is through the medium of contact with the sense objects that the senses are able to give rise to the sensation of pleasure. But once the senses are detached from their respective sense objects, there flows forth no more the pleasure that the senses give rise to. With regard to the Lord, it would mean that he can no more be approached through any of the sense organs or sensations precisely because of the transcendent nature, on the one hand, of the Lord, and, on the other hand, the very capacity of the senses, through the practice of detachment, of generating pleasure has been completely dissolved. However, the transcendent nature of the Lord does not mean that there is dissipation or depletion of Divine bliss. It is *a priori* assumed that the nature of Paramaśiva is characterized by bliss. It would mean that the very nature of the Lord contains the possibility of drinking the nectar once we go deep so as to have perfect immersion in the Divine. It would also mean that the delusive *māyā* is made to vanish from our perception. The concept of *māyā* is so made use of as would explain the innate "power of obscuration" of the Lord. The Lord, while manifesting itself as the universe, appears as a limited individual, thereby obscuring its divine nature. On the one hand, *māyā* is responsible in giving rise to such a form of thinking as would lead to considering the empirical subject as a limited being (*śūnya-pramātā*). On the other hand, it is the very *māyā* as an impurity that gives rise to the

sense of difference among individuals. There, thus, occurs difference between the subject and subject, the subject and object, and between the objects themselves. Our perception of the external world accordingly is based upon the perception of difference (*bheda*). It is *māyā* as a delusory power that is responsible in breaking the continuous sameness in consciousness, and as a result of this break, there emerges undiluted diversity. One of the consequences of this sense of difference is the identification of the not-self (*anātman*) with the Self (*ātman*). This misidentification of the Self with the not-self occurs on account of *māyā*, and thereby the Self is so split as would appear manifold. *Māyā* also gives rise to a brood of veiling factors that veil the essential nature of the Self in such a manner as would make it individualized self. The limiting factors of *māyā* are said to be the following: *kalā, niyati, rāga, vidyā* and *kāla*. It is within the frame of these veiling factors of *māyā* within which the empirical self is made to function.

भिन्नेष्वपि न भिन्नं यच्छिन्नेष्वच्छिन्नमेव च।
नमामः सर्वसामान्यं रूपं तत्पारमेश्वरम्॥६॥

6. **bhinneṣvapi na bhinnaṃ**
yacchinneṣvacchinameva ca/
namāmaḥ sarvasāmānyaṃ rūpaṃ
tatpārameśvaraṃ//

Trs.: Salutation to such intrinsic nature of the Supreme Lord that is (absolutely) universal, and which, while (manifesting itself) in diverse forms, maintains its (indivisible) unity, which does not (undergo any kind) of destruction even in the process of dissolution.

Comment: The verse, first and foremost, establishes *de jure* the universal nature of the Lord, which, within the Trika doctrinal framework, would mean that the non-dual Absolute alone exists. Since the nature of the Absolute is non-dual, characterized by luminous consciousness (*cit-prakāśa*) and cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*), it means that it exists uniquely and singularly. It is this Absolute as consciousness who contains within itself the entire

manifest diversity in a potential form, and as I-consciousness makes it appear as manifold objectivity. The entire objective order, prior to its manifestation, exists potentially in identity with the Absolute in the same manner as the colourful plumage of a peacock exists in the juice of an egg. The manifestation of the diverse universe does not in any manner break the non-dual unity of the Absolute, because the manifestation of objectivity occurs like a reflection in a mirror. A reflection in a mirror appears in such a manner as if it is different from the mirror, which it is not. The reflected image in the mirror does not in any manner harm the unity of the reflected. The theory of reflection, thus, establishes that the manifestation of objectivity as being diverse is a mere appearance. Since the reflection and the reflected, on the surface, appear to be different, so the external diversity has to be accepted as being different from its source to the measure it appears to be different. The waves in the sea, for example, appear to be separate from the ocean to the measure waves appear as waves. Upon the disappearance of waves, the difference that was seen to be existing is no more experienced. The waves, having subsided, become one with the ocean. Within the formulation of this doctrine of appearance the external diversity will be experienced in terms of difference insofar as the appearance appears. However, this external difference disappears the moment the deep absorptive introversion of consciousness occurs, and accordingly is experienced the non-dual nature of the Absolute. The relationship between the Absolute and the manifest universe, according to the Trika thinking, is the same that exists between the seed and the plant. Prior to attaining the manifest condition, the plant exists potentially within the seed. Likewise the universe exists potentially in identity with the Absolute prior to its manifestation. While giving rise to the manifest universe, the Absolute, however, does not undergo any kind of change. It retains its essential integrity without suffering from any kind of divisionary defect. It is so because the character of the Absolute is universal, and so cannot be compared to the notion that the particular (*sāmānya*) exists independently of the whole, as is upheld by the Vaiśeṣikas. For the Buddhists the Whole, which is to say: the universal, does not exist at all. For the

Trika Śaivas it is the Whole who manifests itself through the particulars when objectivity is given rise to.

प्रणवोर्ध्वार्धमात्रातोऽप्यणवे महते पुनः।
ब्रह्माण्डादपि नैर्गुण्यगुणाय स्थाणवे नमः॥७॥

7. **praṇavo'rdhvārdhamātrato'**
pyaṇave mahate punaḥ/
brahmāṇḍādapi nairguṇya-guṇāya
sthāṇave namaḥ//

Trs.: Homage to (such Śiva) who is unmovable, and who (at the same time) is more subtle than the supreme *ardhamātra* of *praṇava*, and is (accordingly) so great (as to surpass) the universe, and (in the same breath is said to have such) attributes as to be devoid of attributes.

Comment: The Absolute as Paramaśiva is said to be so firm as to be immovable (*sthāṇu*), which explains its non-changing aspect. The unchanging nature of the Absolute may be seen as a kind of critique to the Buddhist doctrine of change (*anityatva*), and thereby to the viewpoint which asserts that everything is subject to momentary existence. It is upon this doctrinal viewpoint that the Buddhists vehemently opposed the existence of the permanent (*nitya*) Self. Adhering to empiricism, Buddhists accordingly made an attempt to explain the impermanence of the self in terms of deconstructionism. While denying the existence of a permanent self, the Buddhist have failed in explaining as to who is it that has the cognition or who is it who has the experience of the manifold objectivity. It seems that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is asserting that the nature of the Absolute can be nothing else than to be as permanent as to be unmoving. This firmness of Paramaśiva is so subtle and unchanging as to be beyond even the *praṇava*, which, theoretically speaking, is identified with the Absolute. It is doctrinally maintained that the "auṁ" consists of four *mātrā*-s, which are *akāra, ukāra, makāra*, and *ardha*, meaning thereby *a, u, ṁ*, and *ardha-mātra*. The *ardha* is considered to be the supreme *mātrā* of *praṇava*. The other

aspects of the *praṇava* are *ardhacandra, nirodhi, nāda, nādānta, śakti, vyāpni, samāna* and the *unmanā*. It is the state of *unmanā* which is equated with Paramaśiva, as it is so subtle as to be beyond the approach of human thinking. In contrast to the transcendent aspect of the Absolute, there is the immanent aspect represented by the entire manifest order, or what is called *brahmāṇḍa*. Accordingly a comparison is made between the two aspects of the Absolute: transcendent and immanent, former representing the subtle, whereas the latter representing the gross. It is this dialectical tension of transcendence and of immanence, of subtle and of gross, that one finds existing in the Absolute. Also we are informed that the Absolute in its transcendent (*niṣakalā, anuttara, akula*) is so conceived as to be devoid of attributes (*nirguṇa*). Such an explanation concerning the Absolute denotes that it cannot at all be explained conceptually precisely because it transcends the dichotomous nature of conceptuality. At the same time, however, it is said that the Absolute, in its immanent (*viśvamayatā*) aspect, can be explained in terms of the attributes that it is said to be possessing. It is doctrinally asserted that the manifest world has no possibility to exist apart from the Absolute. It is the divine presence of the Lord that sustains the objective world. From a human perspective, the Absolute can be explained only in terms of experiences that we human have. Since there is warmth of love that is experienced among people, so it is but natural to assume that the One who is the source of our existence must be in possession of love that is infinite and boundless. It is in the context of such thinking that the divine attributes of the Absolute may be understood or taken into consideration.

ब्रह्माण्डगर्भिणीं व्योमव्यापिनः सर्वतोगतेः।
परमेश्वरहंसस्य शक्तिं हंसीमिव स्तुमः॥८॥

8. **brahmāṇḍagarbhiṇīṃ**
vyoma-vyāpinaḥ sarvatogateḥ/
parameśvarahaṁsasya śaktiṃ
haṁsīmiva stumaḥ//

Trs.: While lauding the swan-like energy of the Lord which contains within its womb the universal egg (called the universe), and (the energy of the Lord) thereby is (so pervasive) as to pervade the (entirety) of ether as well is (so energetic) as to be omnipresent (everywhere).

Comment: The term *haṁsa* represents Śiva, whereas *haṁsī* embodies the Energy of Śiva, which is to say: *svātantrya-śakti,* "the energy of freedom." The term *haṁsa,* when inverted, expresses the Upaniṣadic idea of *so'haṁ,* meaning "that I am." The word *haṁsa* is composed of two elements, namely, *haṁ* and *sah,* representing thereby Śiva and Śakti. The manifestation of the entire objective order is actualized through the mutual union of the two, which is to say: of Śiva and Śakti, of *haṁsa* and *haṁsī.* Transcendentally speaking, we refer to *haṁsa* and *haṁsī* as Śiva and Śakti, and from an immanent perspective they symbolize Puruṣa and Prakṛti. All this manifest order, which includes 118 world orders, is, prior to manifestation, contained within the womb of the Energy of Śiva, which is spoken of as *svātantrya-śakti.* It is in and through the "energy of freedom" that the manifest condition of objectivity is actualized.

From the yogic perspective, the breath that we exhale has the sound *sa* of *haṁsa,* whereas the breath we inhale has the sound of *ha* of *haṁsa.* In this manner the *mantra,* called *haṁsa,* is constantly uttered by the empirical individual. Throughout the day and night this *mantra,* called *haṁsa,* is uttered by each individual 21,600 times. It is maintained that a single round of inhalation and exhalation takes 4 seconds, which would mean that the *mantra* is uttered fifteen times in a minute. In an hour the utterance of the *mantra* would be repeated 900 times. This natural form of utterance of the *haṁsa mantra* with each exhalation and inhalation is known as an "automatic utterance" (*japājapa*). The syllable *ha* of the *mantra* is seen to be representing *śakti,* whereas the syallble *sah* is said to be embodying the principle of Śiva. Insofar as the *aṁ* in *haṁsa* is concerned, it is said to be the representative of empirical individual (*jīva*). Also it is said that the incoming breath (*apāna*) represents *śakti,* whereas the out-going breath (*prāṇa*) denotes *śiva.* Accordingly the *mantra haṁsa* is referred to as the *trika-mantra* on

account of it representing the three aspects of the Absolute, which are: *śiva, śakti* and *nara* (*jīva*).

निरूपादानसंभारमभित्तावेव तन्वते।
जगच्चित्रं नमस्तस्मै कलाश्लाघ्याय शूलिने॥९॥

9. **nirupādāna-saṁbhāram-**
abhittāveva tanvate
jagaccitraṁ namastasmai
kalāślāghyāya śūline//

Trs.: I pay homage to that holder of the trident, who, on account of the dexterous skill (=the energy of free will), is to be admired (precisely because) of his (wonderful) production of the picture-like-universe devoid of canvas, (which is to say) in the absence of material and secondary causes.

Comment: Śiva, as the originator and source of the universe, is said to be holding a trident in his hand, which, in symbolic terms, visualizes the triadic principles of Kashmir Shaivism. The trident, while conceived as the "supreme energy" (*parāśakti*), is seen to be representing the three innate powers of the Lord, which are: will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*). It is through these three essential powers that the Lord initiates the process of emission (*visarga*) of the objective universe. The term "will" is seen to be representing the absolute autonomy of the will of Śiva (*svātantrya-śakti*). The Lord is totally free to emit the universe or not to emit it out of itself. There does not exist any kind of internal or external necessity within the Lord that would compel him to emit the universe. Apart from the three powers or energies of the Lord, the trident also represents the three states of Being, which are the highest (*parā*), the intermediary (*parāpara*), and the lowest (*apara*). These levels of Existence or Being affirm as to what kind of ontology Kashmir Shaivism is adumbrating. The trident also explains the Trika epistemology in terms of knowledge that is either dualistic (*bheda-vāda*), or mono-dualistic (*bhedābheda-vāda*), or non-dualistic (*abheda-vāda*). It is through these three epistemic flows,

or standpoints, that the revelatory flow of the Śaiva scriptures has eventuated.

It is the trident-holder, namely, Lord Śiva who is seen to be the originator of the objective universe. The essence of the cosmological theory of Kashmir Shaivism is expressed through the term *nirupādāna*, meaning thereby without depending on any external "material." Kashmir Shaivism rejects the theory of *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing," on the ground that "something" cannot owe its origin to "nothing." To assert that God created the universe "out of nothing" is logically a fallacious assumption. Our experience tells us that "something" has no possibility to flow out of "nothing." Equally is rejected the doctrine that says that the Lord must have made use of the pre-existing material while fashioning, like a potter, the universe. If the doctrine of "pre-existing material" as the source of the universe is accepted, then it would mean that God, like a potter, is no more than a fashioner or a designer. Since the potter is dependent upon the clay for the fashioning of a pot, so likewise God would be dependent upon the materials that would be existing alongside him. As the potter, for example, makes use of clay, of a wheel, and a stick to fashion the pots, so we would have to conclude that God is in no manner an independent entity. Moreover, the existence of the materials alongside God would mean that there would be existing two eternal entities: God and the material entity out of which the world has been fashioned. The existence of two eternal entities would negate the assertion of God being the sole reality. Accordingly has the doctrine of "pre-existing material" been rejected as being the material cause of the universe. The rejection of this doctrine is made on the ground that two eternal entities have no possibility to exist side by side, namely, God and the pre-existing material. Such an assumption negates the viewpoint which asserts that apart from God nothing exists eternally. Moreover, if the doctrine of material stuff is accepted as being one of the causes, apart from God, of the universe, then such a God is a "dependent God" devoid of absolute freedom. For the Trika Śaivas such an assertion is unacceptable precisely because Paramaśiva, in this system, is the embodiment of Freedom. As absolutely Free, depending on nothing, Paramaśiva sends forth or emits the

universe out of himself in the same manner as a "seed" would send out the plant out of itself or like a peacock that emerges out of the juice of an egg. The universe is not a "creation;" it is, rather, emanation. Prior to the emanation, the universe exists potentially in identity with the Lord. We could also say that the universe is like a wave that emerges on the surface of the ocean, or is like a reflection that is reflected in the mirror of Supreme Consciousness. There, thus, is no contradiction is saying that the Lord gives rise to the universe without depending on any material cause. It is the Lord himself who, as the substratum, is the material cause of the universe.

मायाजलोदरात्सम्यगुद्धृत्य विमलीकृतम्।
शिवज्ञानं स्वतो दुग्धं देह्येहि हरहंसः नः॥१०॥

10. **māyā-jalodarāt-samyak-**
uddhṛtya vimalīkṛtaṃ/
śivajñānaṃ svato dugdhaṃ
dehyehi harahaṁsaḥ naḥ//

Trs.: (While pleading that) you may (benignly), O swan-like-Śiva, come (close) to us, (and accordingly) may bestow (upon us) the milk of the knowledge-of-Śiva, which rightly has been taken out from the watery-womb of Māyā, and has been (duly) purified by thee.

Comment: In this verse Lord Śiva is equated to a swan, who is believed to be possessed with the capacity of differentiating water from milk, which is to say: of making appropriate distinction between truth and untruth. Since Lord Śiva is equated to a swan, so it would mean that he alone seems to have this power of making proper discrimination between truth and untruth by taking out the content of water from the milk: water representing ignorance and milk knowledge. It is for the capacity or power of differentiation/discrimination for which the devotee like Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is praying for. This milky knowledge of discrimination is equated to the "supernal knowledge of Śiva." This supernal of

knowledge reveals to us that the external world, which is experienced as being different from Śiva, is fundamentally not different from him. The perception of difference that is constitutive of empirical consciousness is due to the delusive energy of Śiva, known as *māyā*. *Māyā* in Kashmir Shaivism is interpreted from three perspectives: *Māyā* as a delusive energy, as a category *(tattva)*, and as the "knot of ignorance" (*granthi)*. As a delusive force, *māyā* so deludes the individual existent as would lead him to the misidentification of the Self with that that is not-self. As a category, it ushers in what is called "impure course" (*aśuddhādhava*) of emanation. All the categories from Māyā onwards are infected by the impurity of difference, symbolized by *māyīya-mala.* It is the category of Māyā that gives rise to such five products as would circumscribe the existent *puruṣa* with every kind of limitation within the continuum of space-time, and the products are: *niyati, kalā, kāla, rāga* and *vidyā.* These five products are known as the five veils (*pañca-kañcukas*). These veils veil the individual in such manner as would subject him to the temporal causality, which would mean: to finitude. As a finite subject, the individual becomes the victim of the "knots of *māyā,*" and as a result of which he suffers from the "existential doubts" caused by ignorance. It is the urgent wish of a devotee like Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa to be like a swan so that he may possess such supernal knowledge of Śiva in terms of which a proper distinction would be made between what is truth and what is untruth, which thereby affirms the prayer of the Upaniṣads: Lead me, O Lord, from the unreal to the real. The world as it is in its present shape pertains to the "impure course," which means that it is dominated by the delusive force generated by *māyā.* It is only the transcendent knowledge of Śiva that would bring about the riddance from the influence *māyīya-mala,* or what may be called from the "impurity of differentiation." It is upon the restoration of *śuddhavidyā* that access to the non-dual knowledge of the Absolute becomes an actuality. The nature of this knowledge of the Absolute, which otherwise is equated with *śiva-jñāna,* denotes, within the doctrinal framework of the Trika, that this manifest universe is nothing else than the self-expression of Śiva itself, which, in other words, means that the objective universe is non-different from Śiva itself.

षट्प्रमाणीपरिच्छेदभेदयोगेऽप्यभेदिने।
परमार्थैकभावाय बलिं यामो भवाय ते॥११॥

11. ṣaṭpramāṇīpariccheda-
bhedayoge'pyabhedine/
paramārthaikabhāvāya baliṃ
yāmo bhavāya te//

Trs.: We offer ourselves as sacrificial oblations unto thee, O Bhava, who, (in the midst) of seeming (diversity) of division on account of six means of knowledge, retains the unity of its intrinsic nature, and thereby the essential universal form continues to be.

Comment: The six means of knowledge that we make use of in the process of acquiring knowledge are perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), analogy (*upmāna*), verbal testimony (*āgama*), postulation (*arthāpatti*) and non-perception. We establish the existence of any object when we perceive it directly (*pratyakṣa*) through our senses. We say: "this is a pot," because the object, called "pot," is directly being perceived by us through the senses. When we, however, affirm the existence of something in the absence of it being perceived directly, we call it inference (*anumāṇa*). We see, for example, the rising of smoke behind a bush, we thereby conclude that there must be burning something in and around the bush. Such a conclusion is arrived at on the basis of the experience that informs us that whenever and wherever there is smoke, there necessarily has to be fire, which means that smoke has no possibility to exist apart from fire. Inference, thus, is such a means of gathering knowledge in terms of which we have knowledge of the object when the object actually is absent. The third means of knowledge is called analogy (*upamāna*). An analogy is made use of when many similarities between two existing entities are seen. We say that there is a lot of similarity between a yak and a goat, as both the animals are covered with long tufts of hair and are, at the same time, endowed with long horns. Thus we gather knowledge of things that are, in the midst of dissimilarity, similar also. Such forms of knowledge are used as illustrations to exemplify

or to enhance a particular perspective. Whatever knowledge we may gather empirically through such instrumentalities as the senses has to be affirmed in such a manner as would validate it. In the *Āgamas,* for example, such knowledge is revealed that affirms as to whether we have knowledge that is right or is full of errors, particularly in matters that are transcendental. This means of knowledge is also known as the *śabda-pramāṇa,* which means: attestation through the word. When we conclude something, we call it postulation or *arthāpatti.* We see, for example, a well-built man, but have never seen him eating. It is not possible to have a well-built body in the absence of appropriate diet. We thereby are led to the conclusion that the man must be eating an appropriate quantity of healthy food, and that is why he is having a well-built body.

While the means of knowledge offer us various perspectives concerning knowledge, but Paramaśiva, in the midst of this diversity of knowledge, remains beyond the reach of knowledge that is gathered through such instrumentalities that are purely empirical. Paramaśiva is so transcendent as to be single, unique and non-dual. Since Paramaśiva is the basis, the source, of everything, so accordingly he transcends the empirical forms of "proof" that are purely conceptual. For our intellectual satisfaction we may make use of *pramāṇa*-s, but they fail in proving or disproving the existence of Paramaśiva precisely because the means of knowledge have a limited scope. Since Paramaśiva is transcendent, so no intellectual means has the power or capacity to comprehend what *a priori* is said to be infinite, without beginning, middle or end. Thus the Cosmic Being, namely, Paramaśiva, cannot be circumscribed by the "means of knowledge" precisely because of them being limited in scope. It all amounts to saying that the "means of knowledge" are not capable of proving as to whether the Supreme Lord exists or not. It is so because these so-called means depend for their validity on this Cosmic Being itself.

अपि पश्येम गम्भीरां परेण ज्योतिषाभितः।
उन्मृष्टतमसं रम्यामन्तर्भव भवद्गुहाम्॥१२॥

12. api paśyema gambhirāṃ
pareṇa jyotiṣābhitaḥ/
unmṛṣṭatamasaṃ ramyām-
antarbhava bhavadguhāṃ//

Trs.: Will we (ever be able), O Bhava, to cognize in the depths of the heart (=consciousness) thy non-reachable power of Māyā, which, on account of your supreme luminosity, is destitute of darkness (=ignorance) in every way, and which (accordingly) should be agreeable (which is to say is of the nature of supreme will).

Comment: One of the expressions used to explain the presence of the Supreme Lord within us is that of the "heart" *(hṛdayaṃ)*. This heart, mystically speaking, is equated to a "deep and unfathomable cave" *(gambhīraṃ)*. The cave is deep because its depth cannot be measured at all. It is unfathomable because it is so mysterious as to be beyond the ken of understanding. Although the intrinsic nature of the Lord who resides in the deep cave, called the heart, is full of the luminosity of light *(prakāśamayatā)*, yet this light does not seem to be reaching the depths of the cave of the heart. And due the absence of light, there is darkness which is terrifying on account of its horridness. This luminous light *(prakāśa)* of the Lord is said to be identical with the cognitive self-awareness *(vimarśana)*. This cognitive awareness is said to correspond to the absolute Freedom *(svātantrya)* of the Absolute. This *prakāśa-vimarśa* does not seem to be functioning within the *mysterium* abyss of the cave. Although the essential nature of Paramaśiva may be characterized by the luminosity of consciousness and the cognitive awareness, yet, at the empirical level of existence, it seems to be surrounded by such darkness *(tamas)* as to obscure it. This concealment of the essential nature occurs on account of the emergence of the appearance of the category of Māyā, which through its brood of five veiling factors becomes the cause of obscuration. As an obscuring force, *māyā* so veils the luminous light of consciousness as to reduce the individual existent to the status of a bound being, which means that the empirical individual is so fettered by the obscuring nature of *māyā*

as to obstruct the penetration of the supernal knowledge in terms of cognitive awareness. This cave will remain dark to the extent the veiling factors (*kañcuka*-s) are not overcome or negated through the process of self-realization, which cognitively means the emergence of non-dual awareness with regard to the nature of the Absolute. It is upon the transcendence of darkness (=ignorance), caused by *māyā* and its brood, that the seeker, through the process of immersion (*samāveśa*), reaches the end of the tunnel in terms of which is experienced the divine delight that flows forth from the non-dual experience of oneness. Once the "cave of the heart" is bathed in the luminosity of light of consciousness, there accordingly ensues such enjoyable (*ramya*) experience as would disclose the nature of Paramaśiva to be nothing else than bliss (*ānanda*) itself. The radiance of the light of consciousness so transforms the cave as would result in the mystical experience of joy. Two contrasting images of darkness and light are so made use of as to describe the nature of the experiences that a spiritual seeker is expected to encounter in his journey. A seeker experiences the "dark night of the soul" to the measure he is deprived of the experience of Light. Once Light reaches the seeker, he is enflamed with the "living flame" of spirit, and so the "cave" transforms itself into a beautiful (*ramya*) garden of joy.

नमस्तेभ्योऽपि ये सोमकलाकलितशेखरम्।
नाथं स्वप्नेऽपि पश्यन्ति परमानन्ददायिनम्॥१३॥

13. **namastebhyo'pi ye soma-**
kalā-kalita-śekharaṃ/
nāthaṃ svapne'pi paśyanti
paramānanda-dāyinaṃ//

Trs.: I bow down to those (devotees) who, while dreaming, have the cognition of the Supreme Lord, bestower of supreme bliss, whose forehead is beautified by the crescent moon.

Comment: The intention of the verse is to point out that the blessed, indeed, are such devotees who are capable of having the

vision of the Lord even in the state of dream, which indicates the fact that only such devotees are capable of having such dreams who must spiritually be in the proximity of the Lord. If the spiritually advanced devotee has such a vision of exquisite beauty of the Lord in a dream, then what kind of vision would eventuate in the waking state? It is very difficult, nay impossible, to envision the scale and the texture of the vision of the Lord precisely because the Transcendent cannot be explained verbally or imagined pictorially. The crescent moon on the forehead of the Lord should not simply be treated merely as an expression of beauty; rather it indicates the nature of Paramaśiva as being characterized by the nectarine bliss. The Lord, being the embodiment of compassion,pours out of his compassionate grace, in the form divine bliss, on his devotees. Also is indicated that a real devotee is so immersed in the love of the Lord that he is bestowed with such a spiritual capacity as to have the vision of the Lord in a dream. It would mean that a true devotee of the Lord always savours the nectar of the ecstatic bliss of transcendental vision.

भगवन्भव भावत्कं भावं भावयितुं रुचिः।
पुनर्भवभयोच्छेददक्षा कस्मै न रोचते॥१४॥

14. **bhagavanbhava bhāvatkaṃ**
bhāvaṃ bhāvayitum rucih/
punarbhava-bhayoccheda-
dakṣā kasmai na rocate//

Trs.: O Bhava, the most splendid one! Who would not like to have faith (in thee as a means) of contemplating thy essential nature for uprooting the fear of rebirth?

Comment: Most of the Indic schools of thought maintain that each individual, upon death, does not disappear in thin air, but, rather, is reborn in accordance with the deeds he may have performed in this life. The present condition or state of existence of each individual is determined by the deeds that he has performed in the previous life, which, in the form of fruits, have to be reaped

in the present. Thus the individual continues to be making rounds and rounds from one existence to the other till the time the fruits of the deeds are neutralized. The cycle of rebirths ceases to operate the moment an individual gains access to the state of release or what is called liberation (*mokṣa*). The liberated, while still living an embodied existence, does not generate further any fruits when engaged in worldly activity. It is so because his deeds do not flow from any such impulse that is motivated. It is motivated action that really becomes the cause of the cycle of rebirth. Freedom from the cycle of rebirth is not sought in terms of the attainment of heaven. It is sought in terms of such realization that terminates in the experience of identity with Paramaśiva, which is to say: it is a form of experience in which the sense of difference vanishes. The non-dual experience is characterized by such vision in terms of which the entire objectivity is seen as being non-different from the self, and the self equally experiences itself as being one with the entire objectivity. It is such a state of experience that is identified with liberation.

The verse makes it quite clear that the fear of the cycle of rebirth is as terrifying as to be chilling. The chilling fear will continue to haunt the mortal individual till the time he remains deprived of the vision of identity with Lord Śiva. The deprivation of the vision of Śiva is given rise to by the impurities of *āṇava, māyīya* and *kārma* as well as by the five limiting factors (*kañcuka*-s) of *māyā*. We will suffer the endless pain of the becoming process of transmigration from one state of existence to another till the time the limiting factors of *māyā* and impurities continue to operate existentially. It is upon the annulment of this becoming process of transmigration, through the attainment of right knowledge, that there will occur the cessation of pain of rebirth. This cessation of pain is to be experienced the moment the impurities as well the limiting factors of *māyā* are negated. The negation of the three impurities as well as of the five veiling factors shall be realized through the process of what may be called the supernal vision of the Lord, or, should we say that, upon entering the Fourth State (*turya*), we shall be blessed with the vision of the Lord in terms of which we will become capable of recognizing our essential nature as being non-different

from Paramaśiva. This recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of being non-different from Paramaśiva denotes that we essentially are of divine nature. Freedom from the cycle of rebirth will be gained the moment we recognize our essential nature as being nothing else than *cit* and *ānanda*. As to how to gain access to the experience of identity with Paramaśiva Trika Shaivas have enunciated certain spiritual means (*upāya*-s) for this purpose, and the means are known as the *āṇava-upāya, śākta-upāya, śāmbhava-upāya* and *an-upāya*. It is by trudging any one of the means that the spiritual seeker will reach the ultimate goal of life, which is the realization of the state of liberation (*mokṣa*).

यावज्जीवं जगन्नाथ कर्त्तव्यमिदमस्तु नः।
त्वत्प्रसादात्त्वदेकाग्रमनस्कत्वेन या स्थितिः॥१५॥

15. **yāvajjīvaṁ jagannātha**
kartavyam-idaṃ-astu naḥ/
tvatprasādāt-tvad-ekāgra-
manaskatvena yā sthitiḥ//

Trs.: May such state, O Lord of the universe, be accessible to us throughout life that emerges, due to thy grace, by fixing our mind on thee.

Comment: What the verse intends to tell us is that life, devoid of divine consciousness, is like a vast desert where the oppressive noon-day sun, through its warm and piercing rays, burns everything that comes into its ambit. The silence of the desert may be equated to a life of absence that is characterized by negations, and so there is nothing charming and beautiful to be found in such a form of life. It is a life devoid of meaning, and would be like endorsing shamelessly the following statement of Sartre: "Man comes without reason, prolongs out of weakness, and dies by chance." Realizing the possibility of such a situation, the composer of the verse accordingly prostrates before the Lord and prays for such a benign grace that would empower him to fix his mind upon the Divine, and in terms of which may be experienced the transcendent

presence of the Lord. It is through the medium of grace that this possibility exists for us, in the midst of horrid existential desert, to have the experience of the presence of the "Lord of the universe." The grace that may fall upon us is not because of some merit we may have earned. The shower of grace is an unconditional act of divine compassion, which enables us to be the sharer in the divine ecstasy of Beingness. This dependence upon grace points out the fact that we as limited individuals will experience "nothingness" within as absence till the time the mind is not overtaken by the presence of the Lord. Such a situation can emerge only when we are flooded, on account of grace, by the luminous rays of consciousness, which entails the awareness of being as being non-different from the Cosmic Consciousness itself.

शाखासहस्रविस्तीर्ण वेदागममयात्मने।
नमोऽनन्तफलोत्पाद कल्पवृक्षाय शंभवे॥१६॥

16. **śākhā-sahasra-vistīrṇa-**
veda-āgamamayātmane/
namo'nanta-phalotpāda-
kalpavṛkṣāya śaṁbhave//

Trs.: Salutation to (such) Śambhu who, while (engaged in determining) the essential forms of the Vedas and the Āgamas, is (continuously) expanding into thousands of branches, and who, like the heavenly tree, bestows ceaselessly the fruits of diverse nature (unto his devotees).

Comment: The Veda-s/Nigama-s and the Āgama-s/Tantra-s are considered to be such texts that contain the fundamental divine knowledge which, being revelatory in nature, is largely soteriological in intent. The Vedic revelation is to be found in such texts as the *Rigveda, Sāmaveda, Yājurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. As revelation, they are non-human in origin in the sense that the truth found in them exists eternally, and does not owe its origin to any agency other than itself. The Veda-s, thus, represent what is known as the Great Tradition. Insofar as the Āgama-s are

concerned, they are said to have been revealed by Śiva to Pāravati, and are to be found in a dialogue form. In our age, known as *kali-yuga*, the Āgamic texts were revealed to sage Durvāsa by Śrī Kaṇṭhanātha, one of the incarnations of Lord Śiva. The revelatory flow of these texts happened in such three formats as would represent three theological/philosophical schools of thought in terms of dualism (*bhedavāda*), qualifiednon dualism (*bhedābhedavāda*), and non-dualism (*abhedavāda*), representing respectively ten, eighteen and sixty-four texts corresponding to the nomenclatures of Śaiva, Rudra and Bhairava Āgamas. These texts, being revelatory in nature, are compared to a wish-fulfilling heavenly tree, because the intention of these texts is to lead the seeker to the desired goal of redemption. These texts are revelatory precisely they represent the rays of light of Śiva, which denotes that the absolute Lord is so visualized as to be a compact mass of light, and from this divine light issue forth such illuminative rays that are seen as the cause of such enlightenment as would lead, on the one hand, to the experience of non-dual identity with Paramaśiva and, on the other hand, give rise to the experience of freedom/liberation (*mokṣa*) from the transmigratory cycle of becoming. In this manner is occasioned the experience that is characterized by such a mode of Being as would lead to the emanation of that which is true, benign and beautiful, meaning thereby *satyaṃ, śivam, sundaraṃ.*

Apart from the Vedic and Āgamic texts, there exists a vast amount of literature pertaining to different schools of thought as well as to various denominations that have a sectarian orientation. According to the Trika viewpoint, all these various schools and denominations represent the rays of enlightenment of Paramaśiva itself. These various schools have a common source, which is Paramaśiva itself, and accordingly they are termed as being the offshoots of the expanded light of Transcendent itself. These numerous offshoots consists of the Vedic texts, of Buddhism, Jainism, Sāṁkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, the School of Grammar, Mīṁāmsā, and different Tāntric-Śāktic Schools. All these various schools are considered to be valid by the Trika Śaivas. Their validity rests on the fact as to how much are they able to disclose the nature of reality. Since these schools contain the elements of truth,

so they need not be rejected *in toto*. It is because of this attitude of the Trika that we are advised not to speak ill of any school or denomination. In one of the verses of *Śiva-mahimnā-stotra* the facticity of various spiritual paths is described thus:

trayīsāṁkhyaṃ yogaḥ paśupatimataṃ vaiṣṇavamiti
prabhinne prasthāne param-idaṃ-adaḥpathamiti ca//

वाङ् मनः कायकर्माणि विनियोज्य त्वयि प्रभो।
त्वन्मयी भूय निर्द्वन्द्वोः कच्चित्स्यामापि कर्हिचित्॥१७॥

17. **vāṅmanaḥ kāyakarmāni**
viniyojya tvayi prabho/
tvanmayībhūya nirdvandvāḥ kaccits-
yāmāpi karhicit//

Trs.: While being non-different from thee, and (accordingly) offering all our vocal, mental and physical activities to thee, would it ever be possible for us to be devoid of dualities?

Comment: The devotee in the poet has realized that he is "nothing" apart from Śiva. Whatever he is, he is because of Śiva. As an empirical being functioning within the continuum of space-time, he is so contingent as to have realized that his essential source is nowhere else than in Paramaśiva. It is with such a realization that he desires to surrender everything unto the Lord, whether it be vocal, physical or mental aspects of life. Through self-surrender he wants to transcend the dualistic structures of thought, of perception, and the otherness that he experiences at the empirical level of existence. It is through the process of disowning or self-abandonment that he wants to own the Divine, which is to say: to be so inseparable from the Divine as is illumination from the living flame of light, or the illuminating rays from the sun. It is the realization of this non-dual state of unity/identity with the Lord which he wants to experience in every mode of living. It is the spirituality of self-abandonment in terms of which false notions concerning self-identity are discarded. It is a concept which expresses the sentiment of total surrender unto the Lord, and

accordingly the devotee is so empowered as would enable him to cling to the Lord in the manner a baby monkey clings to its mother. The very clinging ultimately results in such a perfect absorption as would result in the abrogation of the sense of difference.

The sense of difference will continue its existence to the measure an individual remains subject to the triad of impurities, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the "veiling factors" (*kañcuka-s*) of Māyā. Upon the manifestation of the category of Māyā, there eventually is given rise to such veiling factors which veil the essential nature of *puruṣa*. It is on account of the concealment of the essential nature that the *puruṣa* experiences as being limited with regard to knowledge and action, which means that he suffers from the loss of the powers of omniscience. This feeling of limitedness comes to be upon the operation of the impurity of *āṇava*. As a limited being, he experiences everything, both epistemically and ontologically, as being different from himself. It is the impurity of *māyā* that is responsible in giving rise to the sense of difference. All these aspects of life-in-the-world eventuate basically on account of the concealment of one's essential nature (*svabhāva*). The concealment of the essential nature corresponds to what may be called the non-knowing, which technically is called ignorance (*avidyā, akhyāti*). This ignorance concerning the nature of the Selfexpresses itself either through spiritual dementia (*pauruṣa-ajñāna*) or through intellectual plunder (*bauddha-ajñāna*). It is upon the restoration of both the forms of knowledge that the sense of difference vanishes by gaining perfect entrance (*samāveśa*) into the Supreme.

जगतां सर्गसंहार-तत्तद्धितनियुक्तिषु।
अनन्यापेक्षसामर्थ्य-शालिने शूलिने नमः॥१८॥

18. **jagatāṃ sarga-saṁhāra-**
tattaddhita-niyuktiṣu/
ananyāpekṣa-sāmarthya-
śāline śūline namaḥ//

Trs. : Prostrations (to the one) who holds the trident (in hand)! and whose power is so incomparable as to be in no need of any

other power that would (help him) in discharging the functions of emanation, dissolution and maintenance of the universe.

Comment: In this verse are explained the five essential powers of the Lord (*pañcakṛtya*), which consist of the power of emanation of the universe (*visarga*), the power of preservation (*sthiti*) of what has been emanated, and the power of dissolution (*saṁhāra*) of the emanated. In addition to this triad of powers, the Lord, while manifesting himself as the universe, conceals (*pidhāna*) his essential nature by reducing himself to the condition of a limited being (*jīva, puruṣa*). The eventuation of this empirical state, characterized by limitations, occurs due the emergence of the category of Māyā in the process of objective manifestation. The process of manifestation, which corresponds to the movement of expansion (*vikāsa, unmeṣa*), becomes the source of limitation, in the form of an individual being, of the essential nature of Śiva. There is equally the other power of Śiva, which is that of grace or revelation (*anugraha*). It is through this power that the Lord reveals his divine nature, and in terms of which the limited individual is so spiritually uplifted as to have the possibility of realizing the state of the unity of Being. This revelatory movement within Śiva corresponds to the power of dissolution (*saṁhāra*) of objectivity, which is concretized by the term *nimeṣa*. That which signifies the dissolution of the universe denotes, at the transcendental level, for Śiva of regaining the repose in its own essential nature, or should we say that it signifies the process of contraction of the "energy of Śiva," which is seen responsible for the expansion of the universe. This process of emanation and dissolution, of expansion and contraction, of objectivity is equated with the opening and closing of the eyes (*unmeṣa-nimeṣa*) of Śiva (cf. *Spandakārikā*, 1.1). This creative process of emanation, preservation and dissolution is a continuous affair. While emanating the universe out of itself, Śiva, in the process of emanation, reduces himself, by concealing the essential nature, to the status of an empirical individual who, in its empirical condition, is circumscribed by the limitations of knowledge and action, which is to say that Śiva, in the form of an individual, has the capacity only to know few things or do few things. This reductive state of Śiva is encapsulated by the concept

of individuality in terms of the "concealment of the essential nature" (*pidhāna*). As an empirical individual, Śiva hides his essential nature (*svarūpa*), and as a result of this concealment the individualized consciousness as an empirical entity loses the capacity of knowing itself as being non-different from Paramaśiva. It is *māyā* as well as the three impurities that so veil the consciousness of the individual as would decapacitate him insofar as the power of knowing one's essential nature is concerned. The category of Māyā, upon its emergence, accomplishes this task of veiling the essential nature of the individual through the five "concealing veils," called *kañucaka*-s. The three impurities that further limit the individual (*puruṣa*) are the *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala* and the *kārma-mala*. The *āṇava-mala* produces the sense of limitation, whereas the *māyīya-mala* gives rise to the sense difference. Insofar as the *kārma-mala* is concerned, it largely is responsible in giving rise to an unending chain of rebirths. In contrast to the power of concealment, the Lord also "reveals" himself through the act of grace (*anugraha*). The individual existent is released from the grip of limitations as well as from the process of endless rebirths the moment the Lord showers his grace upon the individual. It is through these essential five powers that the Lord conducts his creative processes. Moreover, the Lord in the verse is referred to as being the holder of a trident. The three spikes of the trident express the three states of existence, which are: the lower (*apara*), the intermediary (*parāpara*) and the higher (*para*), which are seen to be corresponding to the three epistemic standpoints representing dualism (*bheda-vāda*), qualified dualism (*bhedābheda-vāda*) and non-dualism (*abhedavāda*).

व्यतीतगुणयोगस्य मुख्यध्येयस्य धूर्जटेः।
नामापि ध्यायतां ध्यानैः किमन्यालम्बनैः फलम्॥१९॥

19. vyatīta-guṇa-yogasya mukhya-
dhyeyasya dhūrjaṭeḥ/
nāmāpi dhyāyatāṃ dhyānaiḥ
kimanyālambanaiḥ phalaṃ//

Trs.: Contemplate on the one whose hair is matted and who is

beyond the (reach) of attributes, and who (accordingly) is adored by the supernal beings. What purpose, thus, do the other means (of redemption) serve?

Comment: In iconographic terms, Śiva is so visualized as to be having tufts of matted hair on his head. It is from the locks of such matted hair from which the river Gaṅgā issues forth, and which is equated to such soothing nectar which immediately releases the bound individual from the triad of suffering. The triad of suffering occurs at the three levels of experience whose orientation is either physical, or mental or supernatural. Alongside this doctrine of suffering, there is another doctrine, which maintains that everything, within the realm of material Nature, is dominated by three forms of experience, which express themselves either in the form of pleasure, or in the form of the union of pleasure-pain, or in the form of pain. It is this triadic normative concerning the empirical experience which Śiva is said to be transcending, which is to say that Śiva is beyond the reach of the attributes of *prakṛti*. In the Sāṁkhya system of thought material Nature or *prakṛti* is said to be consisting of three attributes of *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). When these attributes are in the state of equipoise, there is no evolutionary process taking place in *prakṛti*, which means that there does not occur the manifestation of impure categories (*aśuddhādhvā*). Once the equipoise among the constituents is disturbed, there is initiated the evolutionary process in *prakṛti* and in terms of which the manifestation of impure categories (*aśuddha-tattva*-s) eventuates. The Trika Shaivism has accepted this Sāṁkhya doctrine of the constituents (*guṇa*-s) of Nature wholeheartedly. It is in terms of the doctrine of constituents (*guṇa*-s) that human experience is enumerated. A person whose orientation is dominated by the inclination of goodness (*sattva*) is expected to encounter experiences that are filled with joy, whereas a person of passionate (*rajas*) orientation is expected to experience both joy and grief. Insofor as the man of inertial (*tamas*) nature is concerned, he is bound to experience nothing but suffering. These constituents of Nature are also applied to the three innate powers of Śiva of knowledge (*jñāna*), of action (*kriyā*), and of *māyā* in

such a manner as would lead to the bringing about of the manifestation of the impure categories (*aśuddha-tattva*-s). In the limited individual these three constituents bring about such experiences as to be consisting of joy (*sattva*), of pain (*rajas*), and of inertial darkness (*tamas*). Insofar as the powers of knowledge, of action and of *māyā* are concerned, they function in the limited individual (*puruṣa*) in a limited manner.

नमो नमः शिवायेति मन्त्रसामर्थ्यमाश्रिताः।
श्लाघ्यास्ते शांभवीं भूतिमुपभोक्तुं य उद्यताः॥२०॥

20. namo namaḥ śivāyeti
mantrasāmarthyamāśritāḥ/
ślāghyāste śāmbhavīṁ bhūtim
upabhoktuṃ ya udyatāḥ//

Trs.: Fortunate are they who have realized (through immersion) the power of the *mantra*, which is: *namo mamaḥśivāya* (prostration, prostration unto Śiva), and (accordingly) are going to enjoy the glorious splendour of Śambhu.

Comment: A *mantra* is nothing but an abbreviated verbal form of consciousness, which inherently is non-verbal, which is to say is of the nature of sound (*nādātmaka*). An un-uttered sound (*anāhata*), being devoid of determinate form, is said to be identical with the Absolute Word (*parāvāk*), which is non-different from the metaphysical Absolute. This "unuttered sound," when given a verbal form, is seen as an appropriate vehicle or means for the attainment of desired goal, and the goal could be either transcendental or worldly. It is in the context of this viewpoint that the contemplation on a *mantra* is seen to be the enabling power in terms of which the seeker is so enabled as "to free himself from the sins," and thereby "attain the joy of emancipation and heaven, and (also) achieve the fourfold human goals (*pruṣuārtha-catuṣtaya*)" (*Gāyatrī-tantra*). It is contemplation on the *mantra* that its inherent power is aroused, and as a consequence of this arousal of the power, the seeker is enabled to realize the fruit in terms of reaching the desired goal,

which, in our case, would be the realization of the transcendental non-dual state. The arousal of the innate power of the *mantra* is actualized through the silent contemplative utterance of the *namo namaḥ sivāya.*

It would be of great help in understanding the significance of *mantra* if its ontology and epistemology is taken into consideration. The term *mantra* is derived from the root *man*, meaning thereby the one who engages in "reflection." By adding suffix *tra*, the result is in terms of the meaning which would maintain that the *mantra* is such a form of "reflection" that "saves" one from every kind of spiritual fall. From the lexical point of view, the term *mantra* may be seen to be such a short-hand word as to be composed of phoneme or a series of phonemes. A *mantra* has significance and meaning only if transmitted by a competent teacher at the time of initiation. It is the initiatory nature of a *mantra* that makes its character numinous, and thereby the repository of transcendental power. A *mantra* may, thus, be seen as the repository of such divine revelation that is transcendental and not available to those who are outside the sacred structure of initiation.

As the *mantra* is seen to be the main means of realizing the metaphysical Ultimate, it accordingly, with the passage of time, has been identified, in its sound aspect, with the Transcendental Word, or what is called the *parā-vāk* (=logos). This understanding of the Word gave rise to the belief that a *mantra* is but the manifestation of *parāsaṁvid* or *parāvāk*, which, in the Philosophy of Grammar, has been equated with the Absolute, or what technically is called the *śabda brahman.* This idea was further developed in terms of the assertion of locating the source of all sounds in the "unmanifest sound" (*anāhata-nāda*), which is said to be identical with the Absolute. It is, therefore, the sound which, in the form of words (*śabda*) and letters (*varṇa*), gives birth, on the one hand, to the articulated sounds and, on the other hand, generates knowledge of all the differentiated objects (*artha*). It is in the context of such an understanding of language as being the manifest form of the unmanifest sound that ultimately led to the empowering of certain phenomes, called *mantra*-s, with certain powers. A *mantra* accordingly is viewed as representing such a

process of meditation in which the meditator is able to project, through the process of visualization, that which the *mantra* is supposed to be containing. A *mantra* also functions as an aid or support in concentration. A mystical formula, namely, the *mantra*, discloses its meaning to the one who has been initiated, and the meaning is revealed only in meditation. A *mantra* does not convey the meaning of concepts of day-to-day experiences. It is for this reason that a mystical formula is said to be belonging to the twilight zone of meaning. It is their very ambiguity that confers meaning on the mantric-construct. Most of the *mantra*-s, when looked at from a linguistic perspective, are said to be devoid of meaning. Whatever meaning they may be having, it is, as it were, mystical which is revealed to the seeker in meditation.

कः पन्थाः येन न प्राप्यः का च वाङ्नोच्यसे यया।
किं ध्यानं येन न ध्येयः किं वा किं नासि यत्प्रभो॥२१॥

21. kaḥ panthā yena na prāpyaḥ
kā ca vāṅnocyase yayā/
kiṁ dhyānaṃ yena na dhyeyaḥ kiṁ vā
kiṁ nāsi yatprabho//

Trs.: (For a true devotee) what is that path by which thou art not attained? What is that speech through which you are not articulated? (Similarly) what is that form of meditation which does not meditate upon thee? Or what is the point (in counting all of them). O Lord, which of them does not lead unto thee?

Comment: It is a basic doctrinal formulation of the Trika Śaivas that this entire universe, prior to its manifestation, exists potentially in identity with Paramaśiva. It is upon its emission that it seemingly appears to be different from Paramaśiva. The relationship that occurs between Paramaśiva and the world is the same that exists between a reflection and the mirror, which is to say that the relationship is that of non-difference. If it is so, then would it mean that the entire manifest objectivity is characterized by the divine presence in such a manner as would not allow any kind of

difference to occur? Whatever there is in the realm of the world, it is constituted by the Being of all-pervading Lord. In philosophical terms, the universe is nothing but the congealed form of consciousness, which, in other words, means that everything, visible and invisible, is palpitating with the presence of divine throb. Since everything is permeated by the divine presence of the Lord, so everything accordingly must reverberate with the throb of sacrality. In such a context it is no more illogical to maintain that every word, every gesture, every form of meditation must necessarily lead to the non-dual realization of the Absolute. Since nothing has the possibility to exist apart from Paramaśiva, so it means that everything is ontologically grounded in the Absolute. It is within the perspective of such an understanding that the poet points out one of the existential facts which asserts that there is nothing that does not explain or express the way to the Lord. Since the entire universe is the self-expression of thy Being, so there is nothing in the world which does not reveal thee.

अर्चितोऽयमयं ध्यात एष तोषित इत्ययम्।
रसः स्त्रोतः सहस्रेण त्वयि मे भव वर्धताम्॥२२॥

22. **arcito'yamayaṃ dhyāta**
eṣa toṣita ityayaṃ/
rasaḥ srotaḥsahasreṇa tvayi
me bhava vardhatāṃ//

Trs.: The love of mine, O Bhava, while existing in you through my worship, meditation and appeasement, may increase in countless flows.

Comment: The devotee is so devoted to the Lord that he wants his devotional attachment to increase in intensity thousandfold, which is to say: whether in sleep or in the waking state, whether eating or talking, he wants to chant the holy name of the Lord through the means of worship. It is the continuous worshipful remembrance of the Lord that ultimately bestows such grace upon the devotee that leads him to the non-dual state of self-realization.

The flavour that flows from uttering or worshipping the holy Name of the Lord expresses itself within the being of the devotee through numerous ways and forms. Now the devotee is asking the Lord, through his prayerful utterances, that these flows of worship, meditation and contentment may so increase within as to be extensive. The more a devotee engages in the worshipful meditation of the Lord, the more there is the experience of the flavour of the divine delight which ultimately terminates into the experience of universal bliss (*jagadānanda*). The universal aspect of the experience of the divine delight establishes the fact that the nature of Lord Śiva is such as to be cosmic. It is so because nothing has the possibility of existing apart from Śiva. It is from Śiva from whom everything proceeds and into whom everything returns. Recognizing the nature of Śiva, through worship and meditation, as being characterized by omniscience and omnipotence, so the devotee accordingly prays for the thousandfold increase of experiences that are blissfully full of bliss.

नमो निःशेष धीपत्रिमालालयमयात्मने।
नाथाय स्थाणवे तुभ्यं नागयज्ञोपवीतिने॥२३॥

23. **namo niḥśeṣadhīpatri-**
mālālayamayātmane/
nāthāya sthāṇave tubhyaṃ
nāgayajñopavītine//

Trs.: Prostration unto thee, O Lord, who wears a snake (Vāsukī) as a sacred thread, who is (as stationary) as an unmoving trunk, and whose self (functions) as the substratum, in the form of a swarm of birds, of (what is known) as consciousness.

Comment: As an object of meditation, Śiva is so visualized, in iconographic terms, as to be having a snake around the neck as being the representation of a sacred thread. This depiction points out that whatever be the form or shape of the existent, it issues forth from the "being of the Absolute," which is to say that the external manifest universe is the self-extension of the Absolute itself.

The manifest objectivity, prior to its manifestation, exists in identity with the Absolute. Śiva not only is wearing a snake as being a symbol of the sacred thread, he is, at the same time, being compared to a trunk of a tree. As the trunk of a tree, in its standing, position points, depicts or expresses the state of non-motion, so the trunk is seen as a representation of that which, in opposition to motion, may be said to be the symbol of non-change. In this assertion is inserted, in opposition to the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence, the substantialism which has been propounded vigorously by the Vedic/Tāntric tradition, asserting thereby the nature of reality, called *brahman*, as unchanging, and so not subject to perishability. It is on account of this viewpoint that the Absolute is said to be imperishable (*avyaṃ*), devoid of origin (*akulaṃ*), and incomparable (*ameyaṃ*). It is in the context of this viewpoint that the Śaivas considered Paramaśiva to be as unchanging as is the trunk of a tree, which, in the form of a standing log, represents stability in the midst of change. While unchanging in itself, it is the source, the background and the substratum of all the change that is taking place in the objective world. The changing world is compared to a swarm of birds who, in the morning and in the evening, fly in the sky by forming various lines, thereby embodying the phenomenal diversity and change. It is from the unchanging or the indivisible Lord from whom this diversity cum change issues forth and into which it ultimately gets dissolved. Whatever diversity we may experience, it must be seen as being the emanation of the Lord. As in the evening every bird flies back to its nest, so, in the ultimate analysis of the word, everything ultimately dissolves into the "ocean of consciousness," which represents the unchanging Absolute, known as Paramaśiva.

अज्ञानतिमिरस्यैकमौषधं संस्मृतिस्तव।
भव तत्तत्प्रदानेन प्रसादः क्रियतां मयि॥२४॥

24. **ajñāna-timarasyaikam-**
auṣadhaṃ saṁsmṛtistava/
bhava tattatpradānena
prasādaḥ kriyatāṃ mayi//

Trs.: The only medicine for the removal of (the disease from my eye called) darkness of ignorance is the remembrance of thy (Name). Therefore, O Bhava, (this is my prayer unto thee) be so gracious as would enable me to remember thee ceaselessly.

Comment: The verse points out the fundamental epistemological problem of ignorance, which is compared to such darkness as would not allow the proper process of cognition to eventuate. All of us, in one way or the other, suffer from this problem of darkness, which, at the physical level of perception, is compared to a serious eye disease. If the eye suffers from some kind of disease, it is unable to perceive things properly and appropriately. Whatever form of knowledge is obtained by the eye that suffers from the disease of darkness (*timara*), it will always be fallacious and full of errors. It is the error-filled knowledge that is equated with ignorance (*ajñāna*). Ignorance, thus, does not mean absence of knowledge. It mainly means such knowledge that is imperfect and incomplete (*apūrṇa*). This eye disease, in the form of ignorance, functions in two ways. Due to this ignorance, or what may be called erroneous knowledge, we impute reality to that which factually is inexistent. Due to illusion, for example, we perceive rope as being a snake, which is to say that we impose an inexistent snake upon the real rope. The tendency, thus, of erroneous knowledge is to consider the unreal as the real, which would mean that we take the unreal as being the embodiment of the real. It is because of this error in understanding that we identify the Self with the not-self. The other aspect of ignorance is characterized by the perception of difference, which is to say that our cognition of things is based upon such conceptuality which has its roots in the perception of difference. Accordingly we differentiate one thing from the other on account of ignorance. It is on account of *māyīya-mala* that our experience is infused with the sense of difference. Since the nature of reality is non-dual, so the experience of difference must necessarily be erroneous. It is against such forms of ignorance, characterized by the eye disease, that remedy is sought. And the remedy for this type of disease is to be found in the constant remembrance of the holy Name of the Lord. The appropriate medicine against this disease is nothing else than the deep infusion of the holy presence

of the Lord, which would mean that our consciousness must palpitate with the divine presence of the Lord. The conclusion that is arrived at is this: The medicine that has the capacity of restoring the eye to its proper health is the constant remembrance of the Lord. As the healthy eye would be able to see things properly, so the removal of ignorance, symbolized by the darkness of the eye, is the *sine qua non* of overcoming the process of misperception in terms of which, on the one hand, the unreal is imposed upon the real and, on the other hand, everything is perceived essentially to be different from every other thing.

नम ईशाय निःशेष-पुरुषार्थप्रसाधकः।
प्रणन्तव्यः प्रणामोऽपि यदीय इह धीमताम्॥२५॥

25. nama īśāya niḥśeṣa-
puruṣārtha-prasādhakaḥ/
praṇantavyaḥ praṇāmo
'pi yadīya iha dhīmatāṃ//

Trs.: Salutation to (such) Lord to whom the prostrations offered by the wise in the world have (resulted) in the accomplishment of all the goals of life, and so it is profitable to bow down (to the Lord).

Comment: Whatever we are, it is because of the graceful favour of the Lord. It is impossible for us to exist apart from the Lord. The moment an empirical individual realizes the fact of existential contingency in the world, that very moment his heart, nay, his whole being, turns toward Paramaśiva with an attitude of surrender. The very nature of surrender finds its appropriate expression through such verbal means as the utterance of prayer. Prayer expresses an attitude or inclination of the mind in terms of which a devotee takes complete refuge in the Lord. Accordingly surrender takes the posture of prostration. Realizing the ultimacy of Śiva, a devotee thereby develops an orientation in terms of which he so surrenders as would complete the process of self-effacement. It is through self-effacement that the devotee offers

his self-surrender as an oblation in the fire-pit of consciousness. It is through such an offering that fictitious identities are burnt, and thereby are reduced to a heap of ashes. It is due to the prostrations unto thee, O Śiva, that the wise have been successful in accomplishing the four goals life, which are the *dharma, artha, kāma,* and *mokṣa.* An individual cannot achieve much unless he depends on thy grace. It is thy compassionate look alone that is responsible in uplifting an individual in a such a manner as would bear the fruits of success. It is this attitude towards the Divine that seems to be responsible in protecting the devotee from the obstructive spiritual downfall. It is because of this reason that a devotee says that I shall prostrate before the prostrations of those wisemen who have accomplished all the four goals of life successfully. *Iti śivam.*

मग्नैर्भीमे भवाम्भोधौ निलये दुःखयादसाम्।
भक्तिचिन्तामणिं शार्वं ततः प्राप्यं न किं जितम्॥२६॥

26. magnairbhīme bhavāmbhodhau
nilaye duḥkhayādasāṃ/
bhakticintāmaṇim śārvaṃ tataḥ
prāpya na kiṁ jitaṃ //

Trs.: There remains nothing that is to be attained (once) the wish-fulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*) of Śiva's devotion has been acquired from the fearful ocean of the world, (denoting thereby *saṁsāra*), by them who are (completely) immersed/drowned therein, which is the abode of miseries (represented) by aquatic creatures.

Comment: It is an *a priori* doctrinal statement of all the Indic religions that the life-in-the-world is painful precisely because nothing seems to be lasting. Life-in-the-world, on the one hand, is so fleeting as to be momentary and, on the other hand, is characterized by a continuous series of births and deaths. These two aspects of existence – momentariness and the cycle of rebirth – are so empirically situated as to lead to the experience of suffering. The pain that momentariness of existence gives rise to

is characterized by birth, decay and death. What we usually call growth is basically a process that moves towards decay, and that which decays ends in death. Existential pain, therefore, is seen to be constituted by a continuous process of birth and destruction, which is to say that every originate is subject to this dyad of birth and death. Pain, in whatever form it may express itself, is not seen to be accidental, but is viewed as being essential to life. Life, thus, is full of sorrow on account of it being a mere punctuation in the endless process of becoming, viz., *of saṁsāra*. The world is termed as *saṁsāra* because, at the cosmic level, it is constituted by a series of appearances and disappearances and, at the individual level, it involves an endless series of births and deaths of an individual. The theory of *saṁsāra* explains the notion of rebirth in terms of the travel of the soul from one body to another. The doctrine of *saṁsāra* is in itself quite complex as it consists of a number of ideas, namely, of soul being distinct from the body, of *karman* as the main force that binds the soul (*jīva*) to the peg of bondage. The empirical self becomes bound when it gets embodied to the body and in terms of which it travels from one body to another in accordance with the fruits of its deeds (*karman*) performed in previous lives. The soul and the body are said to be distinct from each other on account of the fact that the former is of the nature of intelligence, whereas the latter represents materiality. The self or the soul, as a spiritual entity, transcends all that that materiality embodies. It may, in this context be asked, as to what the self is in itself. The self, as the saying goes, is believed to be supersensible and non-material entity. Although the soul may be said to be distinct from the body, yet it loses its ground the moment it gets involved with the body. As a result of this association with the body, the self is unable to live its authentic nature. Its essential nature remains concealed in the same manner as the light of the sun remains concealed when obstructed by the clouds. It is in the context of this understanding of life-in-the-world which, analogously speaking, is identified with the ocean. This world of becoming, of transmigration from one state of existence to another, is compared to the fearful ocean that contains within its deep waters such horrid aquatic creatures as the crocodile, big fish, shark, etc., symbolizing thereby the terror of pain that is involved in

leading an empirical mode of existence. Those who are drowned in this ocean of transmigration are confronted by the sharks of unfulfilled desires, by the crocodiles of finitude, and thereby by such painful processes of life that are characterized by birth, growth, old age, sickness and death. These ever-recurring experiences, in the form of becoming-processes, are fearful on account of them being so fluxional as to be, like the running waters of a stream, devoid of firmness and stability. In the midst of this infirm flux, an individual tries to cling to things that are inherently as impermanent as is this fearful ocean of sharks and crocodiles. However, there is hope. This depthless and fearful ocean contains within its bosom such a gem which can, like the heavenly tree, fulfill our desires and hopes, and this wish-fulfilling gem is nothing else than the "gem of devotion" to Śiva. Saved are they from the fear of devouring aquatic creatures who are totally and completely so absorbed in the devotion of Śiva as to have a perfect immersion in him. Thus the authentic, and thereby the only cure, for this disease, called by the name of "cycle of rebirth," is devotion to Śiva.

निरावरणनिर्द्वन्द्वनिश्चलज्ञानसम्पदाम्।
ज्ञेयोऽसि किल केऽप्येते ये त्वां जानन्ति धूर्जटे॥२७॥

27. nirāvarṇa-nirdvandva-niścala-jñāna-sampadāṃ/
jñeyo'si kila ke'pyete ye tvāṃ jānanti dhūrjaṭe//

Trs.: It is asserted, O the One Who has Matted Hair *(dhūrjaṭa)*, that (such fortunate ones) know thee (alone) whose wealth of knowledge (of thee) is unshakable, who are devoid of duality and are free from the (concealing) veils of ignorance. (May you, Lord, tell me as) to who are they who have realized thee (as being identical with them).

Comment: Before analyzing the verse, it would be quite profitable if the importance of knowledge, stereologically speaking, is taken into consideration. Man as the mirror of the macrocosm is given a direction when liberation from the process of rebirth is seen in terms of the attainment of salvific knowledge. A person who is

devoid of the redemptory knowledge concerning the essential nature (*svabhāva*) of the self is simply seen as being composed of desire. It is in proportion to desire that will is generated, and it is will that is seen to be the source of deeds that one does. It means that the birth of an individual is not determined by any divine agency; rather it is man himself who, through his deeds, shapes his future destiny. Thus the soteriological goal is not the attainment of heaven; it is rather the attainment of the knowledge of the Self, or what we call of *ātman-brahman*. It is doctrinally asserted that freedom from the bondage of ever-recurring cycle of rebirth results from the realization of identity with the Self. It is the knowledge of unity/identity that constitutes what is called emancipation from the cycle of rebirth. It is against this background or understanding that we should approach this verse. In this verse the means of attainment of this salvific knowledge is said to be the "way of devotion." We are accordingly informed that there are some devotees of Lord Śiva who have perfectly, through their devotion, transcended the structures of differentiation, and thereby there has blossomed such knowledge in them that is free from the "veils of concealment," which is to say from ignorance. The object of this knowledge is nothing else than itself. The knowledge that is initially acquired is through the study of scriptures, and accordingly such knowledge may rightly be said to be "intellectual" (*bauddha-jñāna*) in orientation. It is through the attainment of this "intellectual knowledge" that the seeker enters into the realm of "spiritual knowledge" (*pauruṣa-jñāna*). It is the firmness of spiritual knowledge that enables the devotee to become qualified for the realization of the end-goal of life, which is liberation from the "cycle of rebirth." Insofar as one lacks the devotional sentiment, to that measure one remains under the impact of ignorance, which is to say: under the influence of such knowledge that is imperfect and erroneous. Persistent continuation of erroneous knowledge gives rise to experiences that are pain-giving. The devotee, in contrast to erroneous knowledge (*apūrṇakhyāti*), is blessed with, on account of his devotion to Śiva, knowledge that is full and perfect (*pūrṇakhyāti*). It is perfect knowledge, or should we say error-free knowledge, that results in the state of self-recognition (*svātma-pratyabhijñā*).

निर्गुणोऽपि गुणज्ञानां ज्ञेय एको जयत्यजः।
निष्कामोऽपि प्रकृत्या यः कामनानां परं फलम्॥२८॥

28. nirguṇo'pi guṇa-jñānāṃ
jñeya eko jayatyajaḥ/
niṣkāmo'pi prakṛtyā yaḥ
kāmanānāṁ paraṃ phalaṃ//

Trs.: May the One who is unborn (Śiva) be ever victorious, who, though devoid of attributes (*guṇa*-s), is knowable to those that are endowed with knowledge; and who, being essentially bereft of desires, is the perfect conclusion of all the desires (of his devotees).

Comment: In this verse a contrast is made between the two aspects of Paramaśiva. On the one hand, he is said to be indeterminate, and so accordingly is seen to be transcending the triad of "constituents of *prakṛti*," which are goodness (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), and inertia *(tamas*). The destitution of attributes would imply that the Absolute is so transcendent (*anuttara, niṣkala, akula*) as to be beyond the scope of intellectual knowledge. This transcendent aspect of the Absolute is referred to as *niṣkala*, which is to say: devoid of division. Opposite to the *niṣkala* state is the *sakala* state of the Absolute. The former state, being transcendent, corresponds to the state of the Absolute that is devoid of attributes (*nirguṇa-avasthā*), whereas the latter state is represented by the state of attributes (*saguṇa-avasthā*). There are only two modes available to us through which we have the possibility of knowing an object: one is perception through different senses, and the other is conceptualization. However, mere perception of an object will not necessarily terminate in the emergence of knowledge. Through the sense perception we may perceive the object, but we will not know what the object is unless accompanied by an idea that tells us as to whether the object is a chair or a table. Thus our perception terminates in knowledge when it is accompanied by such a process of conceptualization that terminates in the arising of knowledge. The concepts may help us in understanding as to what the object is, but this understanding is dependent on the attributes of the

object, which is so say as to whether the object is long or short, round or straight, red or white, heavy or light. It is the regime of attributes that sustain the idea concerning the object, and thereby we are so empowered as to have the knowledge of the object. But this criterion does not apply in the case of that which essentially is transcendent (*visvottīrna*), and accordingly the transcendent, transcending the space-time structure, cannot be reached through intellectual means. The only way of knowing the transcendent Absolute is through inward process of contemplation. In contrast to the indeterminate, we have an Absolute that is conceived as being full of attributes. It is through the immanent aspect (*viśvamayatā*) that we have the possibility of knowing the Absolute in terms of specific conceptuality. Allied with this imagery of transcendence and immanence is visualized another conception of the Absolute, which is that of non-desire *(niṣkāma)*. Although devoid of desire, yet Paramaśiva is amazingly so wonderful as to be ever-ready to fulfill all the desires of his devotees. It is through such a tapestry of contrasting images as, for example, transcendence and immanence, desire and non-desire that the character or nature of the Absolute is delineated. The ultimate source of knowing the Absolute is nothing else than his grace, which is to say: it is the fall of divine grace that enables us ultimately to have the power of knowing the Lord.

श्रीरत्नामृतलाभाय क्लिष्टं यत्र न कैः सुरैः।
तत्क्षीरोददमैश्वर्यं तवैव सहजं विभो॥२९॥

29. **śrīratnāmṛta-lābhāya**
kliṣṭaṃ yatra na kaiḥ suraiḥ/
tat-kṣīrodadam-aiśvaryaṃ
tavaiva sahajaṃ vibho//

Trs.: The Lord who bestows (as a gift) the milk-ocean to the heavenly deities, who (accordingly) made the painful effort of obtaining from it (through the process of churning) (the three things), namely, Lakṣmī (the embodiment of wealth), (wish-fulfilling) gem, and (the immortal) nectar, which, O all-pervasive (Śiva), is innate to thee alone.

Comment: The compassionate or the boon-giving-nature of Paramaśiva is a narrative that is explained through the medium of a story with a pedagogic intention. It is believed that there existed what is called the "milky-ocean" (*kṣīrasāgara*), which was owned by Lord Shiva. And this ocean is said to be a great reservoir of wealth as well as of divine nectar. Since both the heavenly beings and the demons desired to have the possession of unlimited wealth, namely, Lakṣmī, as well as of wish-fulfilling gem (*ratna*) and of immortal nectar *(amṛta)*, so both the parties, with the consent of Lord Shiva, engaged in such a kind of activity as would lead to the churning of the milk-ocean. The only way to obtain these three things was to churn the ocean. The possession of Lakṣmī would result in having the unlimited wealth, whereas the possession of jewels would fulfill all the desires one has. Insofar as the possession of nectar is concerned, it would bestow immortality to the one who would drink it. It is for the possession of these three things for which both the parties, namely, the heavenly beings as well as the demons, churned, with great effort, the ocean. In this struggle it were the heavenly beings who succeeded in having the possession of the milky ocean.Upon taking the possession of the milky-ocean, the gods accordingly were fortunate enough in having all the three items, namely, Lakṣmī, wish-fulfilling gem, and the nectar, in their lap. Although the milk-ocean may have been owned by the Lord, yet he gave it, without any hesitation, to the party that successfully churned the ocean. Rightly is Lord Śiva spoken of as being a boon-giver. It is in giving in which the glory of the Lord lies. The more he gives, the more he is glorified. It is because of the giving-nature that Lord Śiva is appropriately termed as a boon-giver.

नमो भक्त्या नृणां मुक्त्यै भवते भव तेऽवते।
स्मृत्या नुत्या च ददते शंभवे शंभवेऽभवे॥३०॥

30. namo bhaktyā nṛṇāṃ
muktyai bhavate bhava te'vate/
smṛtya nutyā ca dadate
śambhave śambhave bhave//

Trs.: Salutations unto thee, O Śambhu! Thou art so (pleasantly) disposed as to liberate such people whose devotion (towards thee) is (exceedingly excellent), and (accordingly) thou art (ever-ready) to protect (such) people on account of remembering thee, and thou continuously bestow such excellence to those who, through their invocations, free themselves from the world.

Comment: The verse points out such important features as would necessarily be considered the constituents of devotional (*bhakti*) spirituality. The substratum of *bhakti* spirituality is considered to be the repeated remembrance of the Divine Name along with the offering of prayers. While uttering the holy Name of the Lord, the devotee thereby contemplatively concentrates on the uttered Name. This repeated remembrance in terms of utterance of the Divine Name results in such a form of immersive absorption as would lead into what may be called the introversion of consciousness. It is through the process of deepening of introversion that the relationship, on the one hand, with the external world, is cut asunder and, on the other, close or intimate union with Absolute is formed in such a manner as would ultimately result in the experience of liberation from the thraldom of metempsychosis. Insofar as prayer is concerned, it gives the sense of assurance to the devotee that he is being protected by the Lord always and everywhere. It is through prayer that the devotee is given the opportunity of surrendering himself in such a manner as would empower him to take the ultimate refuge in the Lord. There is no better protective refuge available to the devotee than the one that is offered by prayer.

सर्वज्ञः सर्वकृत्सर्वमसीति ज्ञानशालिनाम्।
वेद्यं किं कर्म वा नाथ नानन्त्याय त्वयार्प्यते॥३१॥

31. sarvajñaḥ sarvakṛt-
sarvaṃ-asīti jñānaśālināṃ/
vedyaṁ kiṁ karma vā nātha
nānantyāya tvayārpyate//

Trs.: Thy nature, O Lord, is such that thou art omniscient and omnipotent, and accordingly thou art one with everything. Which deed or which knowable of theirs (viz. of the wise men) thou do not universalize when they are endowed with such (inclusive) knowledge.

Comment: A contrast could be made between the beings of pure (*śuddha*) and impure (*aśuddha*) realms of manifestation. The existents of the impure order of manifestation (*aśuddhādhva*) are said to be so contracted in their approach and vision as to be coloured by the colours of ignorance, on the one hand and, on the other hand, to be suffering from the imperfect understanding concerning their essential nature. Since ignorance owes its origin to the impurities that operate within the frame of an empirical individual, so whatever forms of knowledge he may be possessing, they are contracted (*saṁkucita*) on account of them being fully erroneous. The empirical individual is so veiled by the five veils of concealment (*kañcukas*) as to be deprived of the knowledge as to who he essentially is. As the product of Māyā, these five concealing veils function in such a manner as would not allow him to know that he is non-different from the Absolute insofar as the essential nature is concerned. Deprived of self-knowledge, the individual at the same time becomes a victim of the three impurities of *āṇava, māyīya* and *kārma.* Due to *āṇava-mala,* an individual experiences limitation of every kind, particularly with regard to knowledge and action. Insofar as *māyīya-mala* is concerned, it gives rise to the sense of difference, and accordingly an individual is permeated with such a perception in terms of which he perceives everything different from himself. It is the sense of difference that is one of the main causes of bondage. As far as *kārma-mala* is concerned, it is such an impurity which subjects the individual to the wheel of becoming, which is to say: one goes on committing deeds that become the source for future rebirths. Simultaneously an empirical individual is also dominated by the "strands" of goodness, passion and inertia. Under the rubric of these strands, man functions in accordance with the nature of these strands, and accordingly he empirically experiences either pleasure, or pleasure-pain, or simply pain. There is no salvation to the limited being to the measure he

does not free himself from all the impurities, from the veils of concealment, and from the strands of Nature. In contrast to the existent of the impure realm, we have existents that are known as Mantra, Mantreśvara and Mantramaheśvara, and belong to the realm characterized by purity (*śuddhādhva*). In these existents no trace of impurity is to be found, and so they are free from the triad of impurities, or from the pentad of veiling factors. They are aware of their essential nature as being non-different from Paramaśiva. These existents of the pure realm are so empowered as to have the non-different experience of consciousness as being cosmic, and accordingly the transcendent nectarine elixir is experienced in terms of universal bliss (*jagadānanda*). The experience of these existents is universal precisely because the limitations of space-time are no more operative, or should we say that they have transcended the becoming nature of temporality in every way. Free from temporal causality, these existents abide in the spiritual state that is characterized by atemporality.

इच्छाया एव यस्येयत् फलं लोकत्रयात्मकम्।
तस्य ते नाथ कार्याणां को वेत्ति कियती गतिः॥३२॥

32. icchāyā eva yasyeyat
phalaṃ lokatrayātmakaṃ/
tasya te nātha kāryānāṃ
ko vetti kiyatī gatiḥ//

Trs.: Who has the capacity to cognitively (apprehend) the extent of thy function, O Lord, when thy mere will results in the emergence of triadic world!

Comment: In the above statement is established the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute as Godhead. It is because of this reason that the Absolute is said to be possessing five powers, and it is through the independent use of these powers that the process of emanation, preservation and dissolution of the universe is eventuated. It is the divine will of the absolute Godhead that functions as the material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) and instrumental cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) of the universe. It is through the

independence of will that the absolute freedom of the Lord is established. If it is assumed that Lord Śiva is dependent on internal or external necessity concerning the emanation of the universe, then we should be having no compunction in saying that such a view runs contrary to the basic doctrinal standpoint of the Trika, which says: Paramaśiva is dependent on nothing other than itself. When emanating the universe Lord Śiva is not in need, like the potter, on external material. A potter, while fashioning the pots, is in need of such external materials as the clay, water, wheel and the stick. In the absence of these materials, the potter will be unable to fashion the pots, and accordingly his skill of pot-making, in the absence of these materials, will be of no use. Such is not the case with Paramaśiva. It is the "will" of Paramaśiva that should be seen as the cause that causes the emanation of the universe to occur. While emanating the universe, the Lord is in no manner dependent upon the external materials, because the entire universe, prior to its manifestation, exists potentially within in identity with the Lord. It means that the universe exists in the Lord in same manner as does the colourful plumage of a peacock exist in the juice of an egg, or as a plant exists potentially in the seed. Since the entire universe exists potentially within the Lord, so accordingly no need is felt for external material when the process of emanation is initiated. This view of theTrika is based on the Sāṁkhya doctrine of causality, which says that the effect (*kārya*), prior to its actualization as an effect, exists in the cause (*satkāryavāda*). It would mean that the effect is nothing else than the cause itself. If this theory is applied to the Absolute in its entirety, it would mean that the universe is practically nothing other than the Absolute itself. In order to avoid the pitfalls of this theory, the Trika has resorted to the theory of reflection (*bimba-pratibimba-vāda*). According to this theory, the universe is the reflection of the Absolute, which is reflected in the absolute mirror of consciousness. In this manner no harm occurs to the integrity and indivisibility of the Absolute.

ब्रह्मादयोऽपि तद्यस्य कर्मसोपानमालया।
उपर्युपरि धाविन्त लब्धुं धाम नामामि तम्॥३३॥

33. brahmādayo'pi tadyasya
karma-sopāna-mālayā/
uparyupari dhāvanti labdhuṃ
dhāma namāmi taṃ//

Trs.: I prostrate unto the One the attainment of Whose abode is (so transcendent as to be) unthinkable, (and accordingly) even (such deities like) Brahmā, etc. have to run upwards, with full effort, in terms of (traversing) the steps of the ladder.

Comment: The entire manifest world, from a Trika philosophical point of view, is nothing else than the expression of the "energy of Śiva," which is to say that Śiva, through its own energy, expresses itself in the form of the universe. The manifest world, thus, should be seen as the luxuriant expression of divine epiphany. In contrast to this philosophical view of the world as being the self-extension of Absolute itself, there is running, at the popular level of thought, a parallel doctrine which asserts that there are certain deities whose function it is to carry out such tasks that correspond to the five creative divine activities, such as, emanation, preservation and dissolution of phenomena. Since Paramaśiva is said to be transcendent (*anuttara*), so it would mean that we cannot ascribe any kind of activity to it. In order to fill up this gap, the doctrine of the deities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra accordingly has been postulated. It should, thus, be clear that there can be no comparison between Paramaśiva and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra precisely because the former is transcendent and so devoid of origin. This is not the case with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. These deities are assigned specific duties, and the duties are those of emanation of objectivity, preservation of what has been emanated, and the dissolution of the emanated. Brahmā is given the task of emanation of the universe, whereas the task of Viṣṇu is to preserve what has been emanated. Insofar as Rudra is concerned, he is assigned the task of dissolution of the universe. At this point it is necessary to point out that the Paurāṇika concept of Rudra must never be equated or identified with the Pratyabhijñā philosophical concept of Paramaśiva. It is so because Paramaśiva in the Pratyabhijñā system is conceived as being the philosophic Absolute, whereas Rudra is

seen as a mere manifestation of it. Since Rudra is a manifestation of Paramaśiva, so it is accordingly seen to be suffering from the limitations of Māyā, whereas Paramaśiva remains untouched by Māyā and its brood. Also the contingent nature of these deities is shown when we are told that the Abode of Paramaśiva is so transcendent as to be beyond their reach. In order to climb the ladder of spiritual ascension, they have to make strenuous effort in this direction so that the goal of reaching the Abode of Śiva may be realized.

अयं ब्रह्मा महेन्द्रोऽयं सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविमौ।
इति शक्तिलता यस्य पुष्पिता पात्वसवौ भवः॥३४॥

34. **ayaṃ brahmā mahendro**
'yaṃ sūryā-candramasāvimau/
iti śaktilatā yasya puṣpitā
pātvasau bhavaḥ//

Trs.: May such Bhava (extend) his protection unto us whose Energy, in the form of a creeper, has unfolded itself in the shape of Brahmā, Mahendra, Sun and Moon.

Comment: Let us be protected by such Śiva whose Energy, in the form of a creeper, has so flowered or blossomed as to empower us to have the vision of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Sadāśiva and Īśvara, who correspond to the five creative acts (*pañcakṛtya*) of Parama Śiva. It is because of the blossoming of this creeper, called the Energy of Śiva, that we are endowed with such states of consciousness as the waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*) and sleeping (*suṣupti*). It is because of this energy that we are enabled to transcend these three empirical states of consciousness by entering into the Fourth (*turya*) and Beyond the Fourth (*turyātīta*). Also a seeker is enabled to ascend the spiritual states of seven subjects (*pramātā-s*), namely, the *sakala, pralayākala, vijñānākala, mantra, mantreśvara, mantramaheśvara,* and *śaktija.* It is, thus, maintained that whatever exists in the universe, whether visible or invisible, owes its origin to the lovely creeper of the Lord, and this creeper is nothing else than the Energy of the Lord itself.

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karma-sopāna-mālayā/
uparyupari dhāvanti labdhuṃ
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Comment: The entire manifest world, from a Trika philosophical point of view, is nothing else than the expression of the "energy of Śiva," which is to say that Śiva, through its own energy, expresses itself in the form of the universe. The manifest world, thus, should be seen as the luxuriant expression of divine epiphany. In contrast to this philosophical view of the world as being the self-extension of Absolute itself, there is running, at the popular level of thought, a parallel doctrine which asserts that there are certain deities whose function it is to carry out such tasks that correspond to the five creative divine activities, such as, emanation, preservation and dissolution of phenomena. Since Paramaśiva is said to be transcendent (*anuttara*), so it would mean that we cannot ascribe any kind of activity to it. In order to fill up this gap, the doctrine of the deities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra accordingly has been postulated. It should, thus, be clear that there can be no comparison between Paramaśiva and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra precisely because the former is transcendent and so devoid of origin. This is not the case with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. These deities are assigned specific duties, and the duties are those of emanation of objectivity, preservation of what has been emanated, and the dissolution of the emanated. Brahmā is given the task of emanation of the universe, whereas the task of Viṣṇu is to preserve what has been emanated. Insofar as Rudra is concerned, he is assigned the task of dissolution of the universe. At this point it is necessary to point out that the Paurāṇika concept of Rudra must never be equated or identified with the Pratyabhijñā philosophical concept of Paramaśiva. It is so because Paramaśiva in the Pratyabhijñā system is conceived as being the philosophic Absolute, whereas Rudra is

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It would be of great help to the seeker to know as to what, in the context of the Fourth and Beyond the Fourth, the states of consciousness signify. The Trika triadic thinking, for example, is so formulated as to explain the nature of reality from three perspectives, which is to say that reality can be seen to be existing at the lowest level (*apara*), at the intermediate level (*parāpara*), and at the highest level (*parā*). The lowest level of Energy corresponds to the waking and dreaming states, whereas the intermediate level of Energy is seen to be corresponding to the state of deep sleep. Insofar as the highest level of energy is concerned, it is said to be corresponding to the Fourth state of consciousness. The Fourth is such a state which, from a yogic perspective, is seen to be permeating all the states of consciousness simultaneously, which is to say that all the states of consciousness exist in a unified manner at the Fourth level. The Fourth is such a pacified transcendent state of consciousness in which prevails complete repose, and so no stir of any kind exists at this level. Accordingly it is spoken of as being such a state in which the "visualization and conceptualization of form" ceases to be (*rūpātīta*). Since the determinate nature of knowing, at this level, ceases to be, so the experience that eventuates is said to be of undifferentiated and of universal nature. Insofar as the state Beyond the Fourth is concerned, it is permeated by the presence of the "fullness of Being." It is such a state of bliss of I-consciousness as to be unlimited and inexplainable.

भ्रमो न लभ्यते यस्य भ्रान्तान्तः करणैरपि।
दूरगैरपि यस्यान्तो दुर्गमस्तं स्तुमो मृडम्॥३५॥

35. **bhramo na labhyate**
yasya bhrāntāntaḥkaraṇairapi/
dūrgairapi yasyānto
durgamastaṃ stumo mṛḍaṃ//

Trs.: We laud Mṛḍa, the bestower of joy, whose illusion (is so vast as to be beyond) the scope of realization even for such (seekers

who are continuously seeking him) and whose end/limit is not visible/approachable even (to the saints) who are far-walkers.

Comment: Although Lord Śiva as Mṛḍa is seen to be the bestower of joy and peace, yet he is so transcendent as to be unapproachable. The senses and the mind are so empowered as to have the capacity of knowing either through the instrumentality of perception or through the process of conceptualization. A spiritual seeker who attempts at traversing the uncharted path of spirituality has no clue as to how to approach or reach the abode of Śiva. When every kind of effort, whether physical or mental, fails in achieving the goal, then the only option left for the seeker is to surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord, which is to say that the surrender has to be such as to result in complete self-effacement. Complete self-effacement is affected when every kind of false construct is offered as an oblation in the blazing fire of consciousness. It is through self-abandonment that the state of self-effacement is realized, and in terms of which "the doors of spiritual perception" are so opened up as to have the direct revelation of Paramaśiva. The opening up of the doors of perception occurs when there is the fall of divine grace (*śaktipāṭa*). The fall of grace is sudden and unconditional. It is not due to our spiritual merit that is responsible for the descent of grace. It is simply an unconditional gift of the Lord to us. It is on account of this reason that a Śruti text informs us that this innermost Self is not to be realized either through scriptural instruction or through such means that are dependent on self-effort. It is this approach to spirituality that is responsible in giving rise to two standpoints, namely, the standpoint that asserts that it is self-effort that alone leads to the supreme goal of self-realization, and there is also the standpoint which asserts that the self-effort will lead us nowhere spiritually unless sprinkled with the holy water of grace. Thus we have two viewpoints concerning the means of reaching the ultimate goal of life, which is termed as self-dependence and the other-dependence. However, it has been felt by most of the spiritual seekers that without divine grace nothing can be achieved, and for this purpose surrender unto the Lord is not only essential, but a necessary.

नमः स्तुतौ स्मृतौ ध्याने दर्शने स्पर्शने तथा।
प्राप्तौ चानन्दवृन्दाय दयिताय कपर्दिने॥३६॥

36. **namaḥ stutau smṛtau dhyāne**
darśane sparśane tathā/
prāptau cānandavṛndāya
dayitāya kapardine//

Trs.: We salute Kapardine (brown-haired Śiva) who is dear to us, who is the deposit of bliss (for his devotees) insofar as (such acts as) of laudation, remembrance, contemplation, visualization, touch and attainment (of identity with Him) are concerned.

Comment: Lord Śiva is referred to as Kapardine precisely because he is said to be having his hair of brown colour. Lord Śiva is spoken of as being brown-coloured on account of him being, at the subjective level, in possession of all the energies that can be visualized or imagined. As the possessor of innumerable energies, he is adorable, and so is dear to us. He is so benign as to bestow on such a devotee immeasurable ecstatic joy who sings the hymns of praise in his honour, or who visualizes him inwardly through the process of meditation, or who remembers him in such a manner as would lead to the constant utterance of the holy Name. All the states of consciousness of the devotee must be permeated by the presence of Śiva, which would mean that whether one is in the waking state, or in a dream state, or in the state of deep sleep, the devotee must, consciously or unconsciously, sing the praises of the Lord, remember him in the recesses of the subconscious, and touch and see him during the period of meditative visualization. Engaged in such spiritual acts, the devotee accordingly is showered with such grace as would result in the experience of divine delight of I-consciousness.

किं स्मयेनेति मत्वापि मनसा परमेश्वर।
स्मयेन त्वन्मयो ऽस्मीति मामि नात्मनि किं मुदा॥३७॥

37. kiṁ smayeneti matvāpi
manasā parameśvara/
smayena tvanmayo'smīti
māmi nātmani kiṁ mudā//

Trs.: While admitting mentally, O Supreme Lord, as to "what boasting can do!" should I not repose in myself when the joy emerges (on account) of the arrogance that "I am non-different from thee," (which comes into being due to the recognition of thy essential nature)?

Comment: Boasting can be of two types: one kind of boasting comes into play when ignorance so veils the empirical consciousness as to lead to such a form of self-understanding whose criteria of self-evaluation is totally based on erroneous assumptions. The various forms of boasting have their origin in such a conceptual framework which is mainly based upon such false ideas as one's birth, social status, or one's physical make-up. All these assumptions of birth or social status have an end precisely because they have an origin. A thing that has an origin must have an end. All phenomenal events, whatever their nature, come to an end with the passing of time. What it means is this: Whatever exists phenomenally is not permanent on account of it being impermanent. A man of ignorance identifies himself with entities that essentially are impermanent. It is on account of this erroneous identification that the boasting of an ignorant man verges on arrogance. This arrogance is further propelled by being dominated by such propensities or inclinations that are essentially determined by the "strands" (*guṇa*-s) of passion and inertia. A man of spirituality, on the contrary, is aware of himself as being non-different from Parameśvara. For him the world of phenomena, although impermanent phenomenally, is but the self-expression of Paramaśiva itself. If everything is permeated by the palpitating presence of Paramaśiva, then such conceptual expressions as boasting or arrogance have no meaning, because everything is dissolved into the ocean of non-dual unity. So such differentiating concepts as one's birth, or social status, or the physical prowess

have no meaning precisely because they are a concoction of false cognition. A man of spirituality, upon realizing the non-differentiating vision, is seized with such joy that is ecstatic and ensues directly, in the form of cognitive awareness, from the divine delight of I-consciousness.

चिन्तयित्वापि कर्त्तव्यकोटीश्चित्तस्य चापलात्।
विश्राम्यन्भव भावत्कचित्तानन्दे रमेभृशम्॥३८॥

38. **cintayitvāpi kartavya-**
koṭīścittasya cāpalāt/
viśrāmyanbhava bhāvat-
kacittānande rame bhṛśam//

Trs.: O Bhava, on account of the infirmity of (my) mind, I may have contemplated upon numerous deeds, yet I excessively enjoy of reposing (myself) in the ecstasy of thy consciousness.

Comment: The nature of mind is characterized by infirmity, instability, and fickleness. It is in the context of the fickleness of mind that *Yogasūtra* has defined it as being filled with such waves that constantly toss against each other in such a manner as to give rise to states that are either depressive or pleasure oriented. Even the taste of the so-called pleasurable experience is so transitory as to ultimately terminate in depression. The mind also is the source of endless desires. If one desire at a time is satisfied, there are waiting numerous other desires to be satisfied. The non-satisfaction of desires so saps the individual being as to make him dejected, and consequently restless. These various states are enervating, and give rise to mental instability. It is against this analytical background that the only way to protect oneself from the infirmity and instability of the mind is to bring under control all the waves of the mind through the practice of dispassion and detachment. These are the two antidotes against such ills of the mind as, for example, attachment, aversion, greed, anger, and so on. All the negative whirls of the mind are to be seen as consisting of pairs, which is to say: Where there is attachment, there is aversion. I like a thing,

and so am attached to it. I like this thing to which I am attached is because I do not like the other thing. It is this pair of likes and dislikes that is constitutive of most of our inclinations and dispositions. Riddance from these negative pairs is possible only when the mind is pacified. There are two ways of pacifying the mind: One of the ways is to follow such spiritual trajectory as is formulated by the *Yogasūtra,* which is characterized by the yogic discipline and restraints, and in terms of which the practitioner ascends the meditative ladder through the process of introversion of consciousness. The other way is that of self-surrender at the holy feet of the Lord. It is through self-surrender and self-effacement that one's consciousness merges completely into the divine consciousness, which is Paramaśiva. It is through this absorptive merger in Paramaśiva that ultimate repose (*viśrānti*) is found, and at last is found such joy that is not subject to the vicissitude of depletion. It is an ecstatic joy that is everlasting, and palpitates with the divine nectarine bliss.

सूक्ष्मोऽसि चित्त्रिलोकीयं कलामात्रं कथं तव।
स्थूलोऽथ किं सुदर्शो न ब्रह्मादिभिरपि प्रभो॥३९॥

39. sūkṣmo'si cettrilokīyaṁ
kalāmātraṃ kathaṃ tava/
sthūlo'tha kiṁ sudarśo na
brhamādibhirapi prabho//

Trs.: O Lord, if thou art subtle, then how could the three worlds be only a fraction of thee, and if (conversely speaking) thou hast (assumed) the gross form, then why is it that (even the Lords of five powers) like Brahmā and others are unable to see thee?

Comment: This verse deals with the problem of the experience of the absence of God (*deus absconditus*) in the manifest world, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it concerns itself with the question of invisibility of the one who is supposedly to be the source of origin of every kind of phenomena. One of the logical questions that could be raised is with regard to the subtle aspect of

the Divine. If the Absolute as Godhead is so subtle as to be beyond the ken of perception, then in what way could we say that the phenomena have emanated from a source that is subtle. It is logically not plausible to maintain that which is subtle could be the source of origin of that which is gross. The question now arises as to from where has the gross universe originated? If Paramaśiva is considered to be the source of the universe, then he should evidently be the subject of perception, which means that his presence in the world must be perceptible; it must be visible. The other question that is thrown up concerns itself with the problem as to why even the Lords of five divine powers (*pañcakṛtya*) are unable to see you? The five divine powers of Paramaśiva are said to be emanation of phenomena (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*) of the emanated, and dissolution (*saṁhāra*) of the manifest order. In addition to these powers, there are other two powers: the power of concealment (*pidhāna*) of the essential nature and the power of grace (*anugraha*) or what we call the power of revelation. The Lords of these five powers are respectively said to be Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva. Since these Lords of powers must evidently be subtle, so they should accordingly have the capacity of seeing Paramaśiva. But such is not obviously the case. The other question is: If it is assumed that thou hast assumed the gross form for the sake of the production of the gross universe, then you should, without any hesitation, be available to all the denizens of the world, which however does not seem to be the case. It would mean that you are available neither in your subtle form nor in your gross form. It is a puzzle which has assumed the form of a mystery, and let it remain as mysterious as a mystery can be.

वाच्य एषां त्वमेवेति नाभविष्यदिदं यदि।
कः क्लेशं देव वाग्जालेष्वकरिष्यत्सुधीस्तदा॥४०॥

40. vācya eṣāṃ tvameveti
nābhaviṣyadidaṃ yadi/
kaḥ kleśaṃ deva vāgjāle
ṣvakariṣyat-sudhīstadā//

Trs.: As (all these scriptures) have thee alone as (the center-piece) of meaning, and if (recognition) of identity with thee is not realized (through their study), then, O God, who (among) the wise would take the trouble of being (caught up) in the net of words?

Comment: The verse expresses the nature of the riddle as to what means of knowledge are available to us through which we may be able to gather knowledge concerning the nature of the Absolute. One such dependable means of gathering knowledge concerning the Absolute is considered to the scriptural texts.

The scriptures are seen to be the authentic source of divine knowledge on account of its revelational nature, which is to say that the scriptures are said to be non-human (*apuruṣaya*) in origin, and so have their origin in the Transcendent itself. Having their source in the Transcendent, so the information contained in the scriptures is said to be authentic. But the doctrinal format of the scriptures is expressed through the medium of words, and words are nothing but the carrier of such meaning which are conceptually expressed. Moreover, the linguistic framework exists within the continuum of space-time, and that which pertains to the space-time causality must necessarily be of finite nature. If language is the outcome of determinate causality within the framework of space-time, then how can we assume it to be the source of such knowledge that pertains to a reality that is considered to be on the other side of phenomenon, which is to say that finite language or concepts are capable of revealing the nature of the Transcendent. The scriptures, while keeping this perspective in view, affirm the limitation of the conceptual knowledge, whether it be scriptural or non-scriptural. Accordingly we are informed that the scriptural knowledge can only point out, in a limited manner, as to what the nature of the Absolute is. It is so because the essential nature of the Absolute is indeterminate (*nirākāra*), and that which is indeterminate cannot be known conceptually. It is in the context of this understanding that we are informed that the scriptures, even though they may be the best source of knowledge concerning the Divine, cannot instruct us perfectly as to what the Transcendent is in itself. Realizing the contingency of scriptural knowledge, the devotee accordingly so surrenders himself as to seek the divine

intervention, in the form of the fall of grace, insofar as the knowledge of the Absolute is concerned. It is in and through grace alone that we can become participants in the revelational knowledge of the Absolute. It is the Divine Word (*divinum verbum*) which is the ultimate source of knowledge.

क्रमेण कर्मणा केन कया वा प्रज्ञया प्रभो।
दृश्यो ऽसीत्युपदेशेन प्रसादः क्रियतां मम॥४१॥

41. **krameṇa karmaṇā kena**
kayā vā prajñayā prabho/
dṛśyo'sityupadeśena
prasādaḥ kriyatāṃ mama//

Trs.: May thou, O Lord, be (so) favourable to me (as to) instruct me with regard to the steps (to be taken) or (the type) of action that should (be performed) or the kind of intelligence (to be cultivated) by virtue of which thou may be realized.

Comment: This verse expresses the format of a prayer of a supplicant. For a supplicant prayer is the ultimate and final mode of expressing helplessness when all the strategies seem to have failed. Most of us think that we have the capacity and wisdom to formulate strategies that could help us in reaching the goal, whatever the goal may be. When the strategies fail or prove to be incompetent, there evidently would not be reached the goal that one may have set for himself. Also there are situations when certain natural disasters that are so fatal as cannot be remedied. Likewise when a seeker realizes that he is so incompetent as to be unable to distinguish "what ought to be done" from "what ought not to be done." This inability or intellectual deficiency as to how one should discriminate as to what is real and what is not real indicates the "fallenness" of an empirical being. The state of fallenness explains the alienation of the subject from his own subjectivity. This alienation from subjectivity expresses itself through such forms of ignorance in terms of which the unreal (*asat*) is being superimposed upon the real (*sat*). It is a situation which occurs

during the period of illusion. An individual existent, during the period of illusion, superimposes, for example, a non-existent snake on the rope, thinking rope to be the snake. When the conditions of illusion like darkness, etc. are removed, then there occurs the real knowledge, which say that the rope, which was wrongly identified with a snake, represents reality as it should have been presented. The supplicant in the verse expresses the fact that he does not know how to mediate, how to deepen the process of concentration or how to act. Realizing his limitations with regard to knowing and doing, so he completely surrenders unto the Lord, and prayerfully requests that he should be favoured with divine grace. Upon the reception of grace, he is certain that he would have appropriate instructions from an appropriate teacher. At the lotus feet of the teacher he will be taught appropriately as to what steps he should take insofar as the cultivation of spirituality is concerned. He will, thus, be able to traverse the path of spirituality with an intelligence that is right and proper.

नमो निरुपकार्याय त्रैलोक्यैकोपकारिणे।
सर्वस्य स्मृहणीयाय निःस्पृहाय कपर्दिने॥४२॥

42. namo nirupakāryāya trailokyaikopakāriṇe/
sarvasya spṛhaṇīyāya niḥspṛhāya kapardine//

Trs.: I salute such Kapardin, who does not have a benefactor, yet is the only benevolent one (whose benevolence is available) in the three worlds, and who, being devoid of desire, is desired by all.

Comment: In the verse is expressed one of the most important doctrinal and philosophical thought concerning the nature of the Absolute. The verse delineates the idea of the "philosophy of freedom" in terms of which is affirmed the total independence of the Absolute, which would mean that the Absolute is perfectly perfect (*pūrṇa*) in itself, and so does not lack anything, and accordingly is dependent on nothing. A contingent existent, in contrast to the Absolute, suffers *ab initio* from such lacks or wants which are expressed through the desires that may arise in the

mind. The emergence of desire in the mind denotes that there is some kind of lack that is being experienced, and the empirical being wants to satisfy himself through the process of pacification, which, in other words, means that the individual wants to satisfy his desires by resorting to such means which he may think are appropriate. However, most of the time our desires remain unfulfilled, and this unfulfillment of desires gives rise to depression. And depression in turn becomes the source of sorrow and mental agitation. The arising of desire in the mind, unfulfillment of desires, the experience of dissatisfaction, and finally the experience of sorrow – all these shades of experience point out the fact that the empirical individual is a kind of "de drop" in the cauldron of contingency. In contrast to the empirical individual, the Absolute is said to be so "full" as would allow the flow of the "full" from the "full" to take place in such a manner as would not allow the depletion of the "full" to occur. Since the Absolute is full, so the question of dependence on anybody or anything does not arise. And this fact of independence (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute is fully expressed when, through mere willing, the emanation of the objective universe eventuates. While emanating the universe out of itself, the Absolute does not depend on anything in actualizing the process of emission. A potter, on the contrary, is dependent on so many external materials, like the clay, wheel, stick, etc., for the production of a pot. It is so because the potter is a contingent being, and so lacks the capacities that could have been the instruments of perfection. Another aspect of the total independence of the Absolute expresses itself as having the capacity of making to happen that which, from a phenomenal perspective, is termed as being "impossible." The Absolute, through its freedom, is able to accomplish that which for us is impossible. It is within the perspective of "freedom" that we are told that Paramaśiva, while extending help to all, is not himself in need of any help from anybody or anyone. Accordingly we are informed that the Lord not only helps others, but also fulfills the desires of those who ask that their desires may be satisfied. While itself devoid of desires, yet the Absoslute fulfills the desires of all, and accordingly is desired by all.

अहो क्षेत्रज्ञता सेयं कार्याय महते सताम्।
ययानन्तफलां भक्तिं वपन्ति त्वय्यमी प्रभो॥४३॥

43. aho kṣetrajñatā seyaṃ
kāryāya mahate satāṃ/
yayānantaphalāṃ bhaktiṁ
vapanti tvayyamī prabho//

Trs.: How wonderful, O Lord, it is to have the knowledge of *kṣetra,* (which is to say of Paramaśiva precisely because he does not allow his devotees to undergo the painful process of rebirth), and (accordingly) the wise devotees sow (such) seeds of devotion of endless fruits in thee as would lead to the realization of great purpose, (which is that of liberation).

Comment: The plain reading of the verse explains as to how Lord Śiva showers his grace upon his devotees, and how devotees, in turn, put their trust in the Lord. The grace of Lord Śiva is wonderful precisely because it uplifts the devotee immediately from the worldly mire of bondage. As a consequence of this divine grace, the devotees sow the endless seeds in thee, which ripen in the form of fruits. The sweet fruits are the result of devotion of thy devotee, which so empower them as to have an experiential entrance into thy Being. The desire of these devotees is nothing else than to possess thee in such a manner as would lead them to thine embrace. Insofar as the concept of *kṣetrajña* is concerned, it has been well defined and explained in the thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā.* According to the *Bhagavadgītā,* it is an individual existent, or what is called *jīva,* who is equated with the *kṣetrajña,* which is to say: with the "knower of the field." And the body that represents the embodied state of the limited being is identified with *kṣetra,* which is to say: with the "field." Insofar as the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṁkara is concerned, it considers the limited individual (*jīva*) as nothing else than the representation of what it calls *conditioned brahman.* If so, it would amount to saying that the limited individual is non-different from the conditioned *brahman.* At this juncture arises the question as to how it could be

maintained that the body, which, according to Advaita Vedānta, is the product of the elusive power called *māyā,* be said to be identical with the conditioned *brahman*? Insofar as the Pratyabhijñā system is concerned, it deals with the concept of *kṣetra-kṣetrajña* differently. It is *a priori* assumed by the Pratyabhijñā philosophy that whatever is manifest in the objective world, whether it be sentient or insentient, it is nothing else than the self-expression or self-extension of Lord Śiva, which practically means that nothing has the possibility to exist apart from Paramaśiva. It boils down to the fact that everything in the world, nay the world itself, is identical with Paramaśiva. In other words, it means that the world, including the body, is but the manifest form of Paramaśiva. When analyzed further, the Pratyabhijñā doctrine of non-difference tells us that the "knower of the field" and the "field," at the transcendental level, have to be viewed as being identical essentially. It is as the *kṣetrajña* that Lord Śiva protects his devotees from falling into the trap of transmigration, and accordingly it is the limited being called *puruṣa* who knows him to be his Lord. Lord Śiva is, thus, referred to as *kṣetrajña.*

महतीयमहो माया तव मायिन्ययावृतः।
त्वाद्ध्याननिधिलाभेऽपि मुग्धो लोकः श्लथायते॥४४॥

44. **mahatīyamaho māyā**
tava māyinyayāvṛtaḥ/
tvād-dhyāna-nidhi-lābhe'pi
mugdho lokaḥ ślathāyate//

Trs.: O Māyin, thy power of illusion (*māyā*) is (bewitchingly) so vast (and endless) as to obscure thy (essential nature), and (as a result of this), the ignorant are so (incapacitated) as to lag (in recognizing as to who they are) even after having (in possession) the treasure of thy contemplation (=devotion).

Comment: Before analyzing the content of the verse, it would be of great benefit if we make an attempt to find out as to what the concept of *māyā* in the Trika system of thought denotes. Generally

speaking, *māyā* is seen to be such a magical power in terms of which one is so empowered as would have the power of changing the nature of his personality. Accordingly we are told that god Indra was able to change the shape and format of his personality on account of the magical power of *māyā*. However, the Advaita Vedānta school broadened the scope of the concept of *māyā* by giving it a philosophical spin. It sees *māyā* such an elusive force as would be seen to be responsible in giving rise to an apparent universe, which, from an epistemic point, would be considered to be real. So the function of *māyā*, at the epistemic level of thought, is seen to be the cause of misperception and in terms of which the unreal is perceived as being the real, which, in the language of Advaita Vedānta, is termed as the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the unreal on the real. Superimposition is seen such a process of knowledge which erroneously imposes the unreal (*asat*) on the real (*sat*). What it means is this: An ignorant man, out of ignorance, considers a non-existent thing to be existent. This process of taking the unreal as the real occurs on account of illusion, and the eventuation of illusion is the work of *māyā*, nay illusion itself is *māyā*. When we, for example, perceive a rope, due to density of darkness, in the form of a snake, we thereby wrongly impose a non-existent snake on the rope. This misperception of the real as being the unreal is the work of *māyā*, and rightly has, thus, *māyā* been identified with illusion. Now the question that needs to be analyzed is this: Is *māyā* real or unreal. The answer to the question would be: *māyā* as illusion is real to the measure illusion lasts. Upon its sublation it cannot be considered to be real, because that which is real cannot be sublated. The response to this puzzling problem has been in such terms which asserts that we cannot identify it with the real because it is sublated upon knowing the real. Similarly we cannot say that it does not exist precisely it exists during the period when illusion occurs. Accordingly *māyā* is seen to be such a force which is inexpressible and unthinkable.

Māyā in Trika Shaivism is a real force, and so whatever activities it may undertake are to be considered to be real. One of the activities of *māyā* is to conceal the essential nature both of the Absolute and of the empirical existent. This power of obscuration (*tirodhāna-śaktī*) is inherent in the Absolute. At the time of

manifestation of the universe, Paramaśiva consciously manifests itself as the limited individual (*aṇu*), and so as an empirical individual is circumscribed by the limitations of space-time. The limitations of the limited individual are made more effectual by the five products of *māyā*, and these five products of *māyā* (*kāncuka*-s) function as the obscuring veils with regard to *puruṣa*. Upon the manifestation of the category of Māyā (*māyā-tattva*), there occurs the fissure in the unity of the Self through the projection of differentiated diversity of objectivity. On the one hand, there occurs diversity in terms of the manifestation of categories that are constitutive of objectivity, and, on the other hand, *puruṣa* is so obscured by the five veils of obscuration as would reduce it to the status of the "subject of the void" (*śūnya-pramātā*). As a creature of *māyā*, the empirical existent has the experience of total contingency, and also there eventuates the experience of difference in terms of which subject and object and object and object is differentiated. *Māyā*, thus, plays a negative role both at the cosmic level as well as at the individual level. It is this bewildering aspect of *māyā* that is expressed in the verse when complaint is made that thy devotees who, through their devotion, want to concentrate on thee are unable to do so because thy bewitching power, called *māyā*, does not allow them to do so. What, therefore, is the remedy against the ill-effects of *māyā*? The only remedy is more and more devotion towards the Lord.

आरम्भे भव सर्वत्र कर्म वा करणादि वा।
विश्वमस्तु स्वतन्त्रस्तु कर्ता तत्रैकको भवान्॥४५॥

45. **ārambhe bhava sarvatra**
karma vā karaṇādi vā /
viśvamastu svatantrastu
kartā tatraikako bhavān//

Trs.: (It is) everywhere, whether it be the (execution) of action or instrumentality, etc., or the entire world itself, O Bhava, thou art the lone free agent in the (midst of) all the operations.

Comment: In this verse is expressed the idea of the "freedom of the divine will." It is *a priori* affirmed that Paramaśiva alone is independent, which is to say that he is perfectly and completely free to perform any action he desires to perform. However, this idea of freedom of divine will may be extended to human activity in the world. Within the framework of this viewpoint it would mean that whatever activities, at the human level, one may initiate in the world, they cannot bear the appropriate fruit unless willed by the divine will of the Lord. According to this thinking, nothing moves in the world unless willed by Paramaśiva. In this manner is initiated, on the one hand, the doctrine of divine determinate causality and, on the other hand, is elaborated the idea of human contingency. Since it is divine will that decides our fate, so we are nothing but the pawn in the hands of divine determinacy. Whatever freedom we have in initiating or executing our activities in the world, they are always circumscribed by such limitations which space-time causality is capable of imposing. Whatever we do, we have to do it within the limitations of phenomenality. We cannot transcend the laws of Nature, which would mean that we have to function within the parameters of Nature. For example, we cannot sow seeds in a season that is not appropriate. Our desire to sow the seeds is, thus, circumscribed by Nature. This circumscribing of human freedom exposes the contingent nature of existents that live and function within the realm called phenomenon. The divine will, thus, determines all our activities through the laws of Nature. Rightly has it been said that Paramaśiva alone is free to conduct his activities, which means that he alone is truely free.

The concept of *svātantrya* has been explained in the Trika system from two perspectives, namely, from the perspective of knowledge and action, which is to say that Paramaśiva is absolutely so independent with regard to knowing and doing that the epithets of omniscience and omnipotence have been ascribed to it. Possessing the power of knowledge (*jñatṛtva-śakti*), Paramaśiva accordingly is referred to as the knower (*jñātā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and the knowable (*jñeya*). In the context of action, Paramaśiva is described as the doer (*kartā*), action (*karma*), and the instrument

of action (*karaṇa*). It was Pāṇinī who, for the first time, explained the concept of freedom in one of his aphorisms: *svātantraḥkartā*. It is the agent in whom is displayed both freedom and slavery, and that is what the aphorism of Pāṇinī expresses. It is in this concept of freedom in which the Trika philosophy of freedom (*svātantryavāda*) is grounded.

त्रिगुणत्रिपरिस्पन्द-द्वन्द्वग्रस्तं जगत्त्रयम्।
उद्धर्तुं भवतोऽन्यस्य कस्य शक्तिः कृपाथ वा॥४६॥

46. **triguṇa-triparispanda-**
dvandvagrastaṁ jagattrayaṃ/
uddhartuṃ bhavato'nyasya
kasya śaktiḥ kṛpātha vā//

Trs.: It is the pair of opposites as well as the threefold waves of the triple constituents (*guṇa*-s) that (constantly) devour the triple world of (*bhūr, bhuvaḥ*, and *svaḥ*). In such a scenario (O Lord!) whose (graceful) compassion other than yours is (capable) of uplifting them (viz. the worlds) up.

Comment: The three worlds, when looked at externally, could be seen to be corresponding to the objective world, to the intermediary world, and to the heavenly world. When seen from the perspective of interiority, the three worlds are said to be representing the three states of consciousness of an empirical individual, which are the waking state (*jāgrat*), sleeping state (*suṣupti*) and the dreaming state (*svapna*). These three worlds are under the sway of three constituents (*guṇa*-s) and three movements (*triparispanda*). It is this duality (*dvandva*) of constituents and of the movement that seems to be constantly devouring this triple formation. The theory of constituents, within the Trika formulation, is accepted as being the part and parcel of what is called *prakṛti*. The three constituents are said to be beingness (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*) and inertia (*tamas*). Along with the three constituents, Trika also accepts the three innate powers of Paramaśiva, which are said to be will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*). When

Paramaśiva emits the universe, he supposedly manifests himself as a limited existent. As a limited being, he would evidently be having also limited powers of will, knowledge and action. These limited powers of Paramaśiva as a limited being correspond to the three constituents of *prakṛti*. Each individual is trapped within the trap of constituents. A person can be inclined either towards the good, or towards such an activity that is either pleasant or unpleasant, or towards the dark clouds of *tamas*. Being caught up in the trap of constituent, an individual existent gets bound to the bondage of becoming. It is this transmigratory travel from one existence to another that is intensely painful. And it is the fall of divine grace that can be the perfect antidote against this painful illness of transmigration. There is no any other way of getting rid from the cage of transmigratory bondage.

दोषोऽपि देव को दोषस्त्वामाप्तुं यः समास्थितः।
गुणोऽपि च गुणः को नु त्वां नाप्तुं यः समाथितः॥४७॥

47. **doṣo'pi deva ko doṣas-**
tvāmāptuṃ yaḥ samāsthitaḥ/
guno'pi ca guṇah ko nu tvāṃ
nāptuṃ yaḥ samāthitaḥ //

Trs.: A defect is no longer a defect when, O the Effulgent One, if it is directed towards thy attainment. A virtue (on the contrary) is no longer a virtue if it (fails) in leading one to thy attainment.

Comment: The verse contains in an incipient form the kind of philosophy that is known as being situational philosophy. Each problem has to be viewed in the context of the situation that is seen to be responsible in having given birth to it. Since it is the context, or what may be called the situation, that is seen to be responsible for the existence of the problem, so the treatment or solution of the problem would largely be determined by the situation itself. It would mean that the events of the past, for example, cannot be evaluated within the contemporary conceptual framework. The events of the past, therefore, must be analyzed in

love the Lord intensely are so immersed in the divine sameness as to have completely forgotten the particularity of their identity. A real lover of Paramaśiva does not know as to whether he is from a family that is well spoken of in society or from a family that has ill repute in society. It is so because he has made his identity of particularity melt away in the vastness of Being. For he sees in everyone his own image and the image of everyone in himself. When this rule of love is applied to the divine nature of the Absolute, it would mean that in front of God's grace everyone is equal. The grace of the Lord pours on everybody in equal measure. Since divine compassion is one and the same for everyone, so his grace would also treat everybody equally. It is not our merit that should be seen as a means of gaining access to the grace of the Lord. The grace of the Lord, rather, is unconditional. Since we are all, without any distinction, sharers in the grace of the Lord, so we are equally beneficiaries of it, which would mean that we are all qualified for the ranks of those who seek the attainment of liberation from the tormenting cycle of transmigration, which is to say: from the endless series of rebirths and re-deaths. It is, thus, not our piety that would enable us to enter the abode of divine grace; rather it would be our love and God's compassion that would become the *raison d être* for liberation. It is a viewpoint which maintains that it is not the self-effort that should be seen as the fulcrum of spiritual ascension; it is, rather, the other dependence, epitomized by grace, that must be considered as the most appropriate vehicle at arriving the ultimate goal of life, which consists of in the attainment of liberation. It is the spirituality of *bhakti* that is the carrier of the spiritual tradition of other dependence, whereas the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) would adhere, while not discounting the way of love (*bhakti-mārga*), by and large to the standpoint of self-effort/self-dependence.

आरम्भः सर्वकार्याणां पर्यन्तः सर्वकर्मणाम्।
तदन्तर्वृत्तयश्चित्रा-स्तवैवेश धियः पथि॥५०॥

50. ārambhaḥ sarvakāryāṇām
paryantaḥ sarvakarmaṇāṃ/

tadantarvṛttayaścitrā-
stavaiveśa dhiyaḥ pathi//

Trs.: It is, O Lord, thy supreme consciousness (alone) which, while marking the beginning and end in all thy undertakings, contains all the diverse states that fall within the range of these limits.

Comment: In this verse is explained, on the one hand, the nature of the Absolute and, on the other hand, is briefly explained the doctrine of non-difference, which is to say: whatever exists in the universe, including the universe itself, exists in identity with the Absolute. Let us now take into consideration as to what is constitutive of the nature of the Absolute, or should we say: as to how the Absolute is conceived in the Trika system of thought. The Absolute, according to the Trika, has two aspects: transcendent (*anuttara, niṣkala*) and immanent (*viśvamaya, sakala*). As an immanent presence, the Absolute is the universe, which, in other words, means that the universe is non-different from the Absolute. The Absolute of Trika not only expresses itself as being non-dualistic, but also discloses its nature to have an orientation that is theistic. It is because of its theism that the Trika can easily speak of the Absolute as being endowed with five innate powers of consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action. It is through the powers of will, knowledge and action that the play of manifestation of the manifest world is enacted. The Absolute of the Trika, thus, is not, like the *brahman* of the Advaita Vedānta, so peaceful as to be compared with the "nothingness" (*śūnyatā*) of Nāgārjuna. The Trika has developed a very healthy phenomenology in terms of which the Absolute is seen to be of the nature of consciousness, and this consciousness is not simply characterized by luminosity, but functions as cognitive awareness. Were the Absolute not identical with luminosity and cognitive awareness, there would occur no manifestation of the world. The world is manifest precisely because of the luminosity of consciousness. It is the luminosity of consciousness that makes everything manifest, and thereby knowable. It is through the process of cognitive awareness that consciousness not only makes things to appear, but makes it knowable. It is because of the knowability of the object that we

apprehend it, and thereby know it. The idea of non-dual Absolute as Godhead is well expressed by Utpaladeva, in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā* (1.2), thus: "Maheśvara lies as my own self (*svātma*) and it is proved in the very beginning (*ādisiddha*) as myself who is the doer (*kartā*) and the knower (*jñatā*)." The above statement of Utpalācārya establishes the fact that this entire universe is the manifest form of Maheśvara. The Absolute, in the form of Godhead, is conceived to be the doer and knower precisely because of it being of the nature of consciousness. Had the Absolute not been of the nature of consciousness, then we would not have known it because, in the absence of luminous consciousness, the possibility of knowledge would not have existed. Since the Absolute is of the nature of consciousness, and the world as a knowable has the possibility of being known through the process of knowledge, so accordingly is established the fact that consciousness is the basis of all that that is manifest. The world is knowable precisely because it is manifest, and as a manifest entity, it is known in the form of knowledge. Accordingly is maintained that the Absolute is self-shining (*sva-prakāśa*), which would mean that it is known to itself.

यावदुत्तरमास्वाद-सहस्रगुणविस्तरः।
त्वद्भक्तिरसपीयूषान्नाथ नान्यत्र दृश्यते॥५१॥

51. **yāvaduttaramāsvāda-**
sahasraguṇavistaraḥ/
tvadbhaktirasapīyūṣān-
nātha nānyatra dṛśyate//

Trs.: The supreme bliss, which has innumerable virtues that are innate to it, is nowhere found/seen, O Lord, except in the (fountain) of the (immortal) nectar of thy devotional flavour/taste.

Comment: There are various views concerning the nature of *bhakti*. Some hold the view that *bhakti* is nothing more nor less than a particular mode or state (*viśeṣa bhāva*) of the mind. In contrast to this view, there are others who think of *bhakti* as being a form of

taste/flavour (*rasarūpa*). It is the flavour of a taste that determines as to what is the nature of *bhakti.* It is the nectarine form of bliss that usually is experienced by a devotee during the period of mystical union with the Lord, or should we say that when the Lord holds the devotee in tight embrace , there ensues the flow of sweet nectar in the form of elixir. Upon receiving this immortal elixir the devotee has the entrance into the Supreme Abode of Paramaśiva. The experience of the ecstasy of divine delight is not to be found in the feeling of pleasures that one may encounter in the world, but is tasted alone in the nectar that flows forth, through the divine epiphany, from Maheśvara itself, and the flowing of the nectar is occasioned when the experience of the "great union" with the Divine eventuates. The world would become the field of this experience the moment this divine taste is extended to it, and accordingly it is seen to be throbbing with the self-shining throb of the Absolute itself. It would mean that the immanent presence of the Lord in the world is tasted as sweet and ecstatic delight.

उपसंहृतकामाया कामायतिमतन्वते।
अवतंसितसोमाय सोमाय स्वामिने नमः॥५२॥

52. upāsaṁhṛtakāmāyā kāmāyatimatanvate/
avatamsitasomāya somāya svāmine namaḥ//

Trs.: Salutations unto such Lord along with his consort, Umā, who has bedecked (his forehead) with the crescent moon, who has withdrawn unto himself all the (forms) of bliss, and who manifests the entire universe (in diverse forms and actions).

Comment: The term *soma* is seen to be a conjugation of *sa* and *umā.* The letter *sa* is viewed as referring to the ever-pulsating light of consciousness (*cinmayamaheśvara*), and *umā* refers to the consort of Śiva, which, at the philosophical level of thought, represents the cognitive awareness. The Absolute as the unity of light of consciousness and cognitive awareness is, at the iconographical level of depiction, represented by the concept of *ardhanārīśvara.* At the empirical level of thought, it explains the idea of sameness between masculinity and femininity, which depicts the idea of co-

existence between the so-called contrary natures. This contrariness between *cit* and *vimarśa,* between male and female, that is experienced at the empirical level of thought evaporates in the crucible of non-dual Absolute. It is within the framework of this conceptuality that Paramaśiva as consciousness is considered to be a unity of Light and Awareness. The philosophical concept of awareness is, at the level of theological thinking, so personified as to represent the Goddess, who is seen to be embodying the feminine aspect, in the form of Umā, of the Absolute. The Absolute, thus, is seen to be the unity of Śiva and Śakti, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa,* of consciousness and cognition or awareness, of Being and Becoming. When it is said that Śiva is inseparable from its own Śakti, which is Umā, it means that it embodies the power of awareness (*vimarśa-śakti*), which expresses itself in the form of the power of will (*icchā-śakti*). The Trika system has conceived the Absolute in such a manner as would be characterized by the luminosity of consciousness as well as by self-awareness. Even Śaṁkara seems to be adumbrating this viewpoint concerning the Absolute when he says: *śivahśaktyayukto yadibha-vatiśaktaḥprabhavitum/ nacedevaṃ devo na khalus anditumapi.* The Trika conception of the Absolute as being the unity of Being and Becoming, *cit* and *kriyā, prakāśa* and *vimarśa,* would mean such a type of non-dualism which basically is a synthesis of opposites, or what may be called the *coincidentia oppositorum.* Such a view would be representing the Hegelian dialectic of thesis and antithesis, which ultimately terminates in the unity of synthesis. It is in terms of synthesis of opposites that the perfect unity (*tādātmyatā*) of Being is realized.

There is another concept that is inserted in the verse, and it is the idea of crescent moon (*soma*), which is seen to be decorating the forehead of Śiva. The forehead of Śiva is seen to be epitomizing the concept of "free will" (*svātantrya*). This concept of *avatamsita soma* expresses the idea that the entire universe has its abode in the free will of Lord Śiva. The Trika concept of free will as representing the absolute freedom of Śiva is seen as an antidote against the doctrine of causal determinacy. It would mean that Lord Śiva is so free in his doing and knowing as would override every kind of deterministic obstruction. When the Lord, for

example, manifests itself as the universe, there is no power in heaven or earth that has the capacity of being an impediment in the execution of his will. Whatever be the situation, whether it be that of manifestation or dissolution, the lordliness of Lord Śiva remains indivisible. It is through the operation of the autonomy of will (*svecchā*) that the play of manifestation and dissolution is enacted and executed. Paramaśiva, while engaged in the activity of cognition (*vimarśana*) of self-autonomy, is so delighted by his absolute freedom as would result in the emergence of desire within towards externalization, and in terms of which is actualized the process of manifestation of the manifest world. It is in this state when Paramaśiva, through the unrestrained (*aniruddha*) self-will, manifests the reflections of his own powers in his own subjective mirror, which take the form of emanation and dissolution of the universe. Had Paramaśiva been devoid of free will, it would have been quite impossible to bring about the manifestation of the universe, nay there would have been no universe existing at all. The very existence of the world demonstrates the fact that Lord Śiva is completely free to engage in any activity he desires without any restraint.

किमशक्तः करोमीति सर्वत्रानध्यवस्यतः।
सर्वानुग्राहिका शक्तिः शाङ्करी शरणं मम॥५३॥

53. **kimaśaktaḥ karomīti**
sarvatrānadhyavasyataḥ/
sarvānugrāhikā śaktiḥ
śāṁkarī śaraṇaṃ mama//

Trs.: (Having been overcome by Māyā in the state of wakefulness,) and so what should I do in the absence of (any kind) of power? In such a situation it is the graceful power of Śaṁkara (alone) that should be my refuge, as I am (inherently) devoid of determination.

Comment: The verse explains and expresses the idea as to how and in what manner a conditioned being is made to experience helplessness of contingency in situations that are beyond his

control. An empirical being will continue to experience the helplessness of contingency to the measure he remains an embodied existent. On the scale of manifestation of categories, the individual existent appears at that point of time when *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, under the rubric of impure course (*aśuddhādhvā*), make their appearance. It is at this point that the category of Māyā makes its appearance in such a manner as to bring about sharp differentiation between the pure course of manifestation, which extends from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, and the impure course of manifestation, and the sway of impure manifestation extends from the category of Māyā to solid Earth. The entire manifest order from the category of Māyā to that of Earth is said to be impure on account of suffering from the defect of diversity, which is to say: From the sense of duality. It is Māyā as a category that inserts two such deficiencies in the order of manifestation which have become a part and parcel of conditioned existence, and the deficiencies express themselves, on the one hand, by concealing the essential nature through the five concealing veils and, on the other hand, gives rise to the sense of difference through the impurity of *māyīya-mala*. The five veiling factors of Māyā so the veil the essential nature as would deprive the empirical individual from knowing as to who he essentially is. It is on account of this non-knowing of the essential nature that the empirical existent experiences the limitation of everything, and thus the finitude of temporality reduces him to the state of contingency. On account of the experience of contingency, the individual being accordingly experiences that his freedom with regard to knowing is so circumscribed by the finite limitations as would become the "subject of the void" (*śūnya-pramātā*). It is as a *śūnya-pramātā* that the individual existent has the experience of diversity in terms of difference. He experiences difference between the object and object, between the subject and the object. These are the two ills or deficiency of contingency, in one form or the other, that the individual existent is made to experience. Realizing his limitations and weaknesses, the individual comes to know that there is only one way of escape from this choking experience of finitude, and it consists of in taking the ultimate refuge in Lord Śiva. In doing so,

all the barriers of limitations, of causal determination, of finitude would be overcome upon the descent of divine grace. The concept of divine grace (*śaktipāta, anugraha*) explains the idea that the impediments that we come across in the life of a contingent being can be overcome, on the one hand, by seeking refuge in the benevolent compassion of Paramaśiva and, on the other hand, by depending on the showers of grace that are so cooling as to eliminate the poison of finitude represented by *saṁsāra.*

गुणातीतस्य निर्दिष्ट-निःशेषातिशयात्मनः।
लभ्यते भव कुत्रांशे परः प्रतिनिधिस्तव॥५४॥

54. **guṇātītasya nirdiṣṭa-**
niḥśeṣātiśayātmanaḥ/
labhyate bhava kutrāṁśe
paraḥ pratinidhistava//

Trs.: Transcending the constituents of (Nature), (tell me) O Bhava, in which part, while transcending all the determinants, could thy second representative be found.

Comment: Since the Absolute is transcendent to every pair of opposites, so it must necessarily be so ineffable as to be beyond any kind of definition. If the ineffability of the Absolute denotes its character to be non-knowability, then on what basis do we at all speak of the existence of Being as being the source of the manifest categories. It is at this point of conceptual thinking that the Absolute is equated with consciousness, and it is in the Light of consciousness that the "other representative" (*pratinidhi*) is to be found. The Trika doctrinal formulation asserts that the Absolute, apart from luminous consciousness, is also self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśamaya*). This metaphysical thinking of the Trika is necessitated by the looming danger, on the one hand, of nihilism and, on the other hand, by reducing the Absolute to the status of an inert object (*jaḍatva*). We know that a diamond shines with its own luminosity, yet the diamond does not know, on account of it being inert, that it shines. It is not, however, the case with the

Absolute of Trika. The Absolute as Paramaśiva knows its nature to be characterized by the luminosity of consciousness, and so it knows that it is shining with its inherent light. In the language of Trika, it denotes the immediate, non-relational awareness of itself as being the supreme "I." It is awareness of itself as "I" that is encapsulated by the term *vimarśa*. It is by conceiving the Absolute as being not merely consciousness (*cit*), but as I-consciousness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*) that the Trika thereby safeguards the Absolute from being a mere inert object.

It is the very nature of luminous consciousness to be of the nature of self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśātmaka*), which practically means that the very occurrence of cognition (*ābhāsa*) results simultaneously in the experience of self-awareness in term of I-ness (*ahaṁ-pratīti*). The awareness as I-ness appears in the mirror of consciousness, and is always characterized by awareness, whereas the reflection that eventuates in an inert mirror is destitute of such awareness. The inert mirror may receive innumerable reflections, but it will never be aware of them on account of the fact that appearance does not occur in terms of I-ness. It is the conscious subject (*pramātā*) who has the experience of the reflections that are reflected in the mirror. The appearance of reflections in the mirror are actualized by the light of consciousness, and the cognitive aspect of consciousness concretizes this appearance in terms of awareness of I-ness. Consciousness, thus, always carries out its activities through the innate dyad of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. In this manner appearance and awareness of I-ness constitute the activity of knowing and doing, which is to say that luminosity (*prakāśatā*) of the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) constitutes it awareness. Likewise the cognitive awareness embodies the luminous aspect of consciousness. So it would amount to saying that the Absolute is a unity of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, and accordingly even in its transcendence the Absolute is not so ineffable as to remain unknown. The Absolute, though faintly, is known to us, at the individual level, through the activity of knowing and doing.

निर्द्वन्द्वे निरुपाधौ च त्वय्यात्मनि सति प्रभो।
वयं वञ्च्यामहेऽद्यापि माययामेयया तव॥५५॥

55. nirdvandve nirupādhau
ca tvayyātmani sati prabho/
vayaṃ vañcayāmahe'dyāpi
māyayāmeyayā tava //

Trs.: (While having realized thy essential nature) as being supremely free from duality and devoid of adjuncts, yet, O Lord, we are even at this level (of realization) deluded by thy immeasurable Māyā.

Comment: It is, first of all, established that the nature of the Absolute is *nirdvanda,* which is to say: beyond the pairs of opposites. In practical terms it would mean that the non-dual nature of Paramaśiva is such as to be beyond both love and hate. Devoid of dyadic forms of inclination, it would accordingly mean that the Lord neither loves those who love him nor does he hate those who engage in sinful activities. The other aspect of Paramaśiva's non-dual nature is characterized by being devoid of or free from adjuncts. The doctrine of adjuncts (*adhyāsa*) may be explained by making use of the illustration of rope and snake. Due to illusion, we mistakenly identify rope with the snake, or, in other words, we superimpose a non-existent snake upon the real rope. This misperception which is seen to be the cause of false identification of the real with the unreal, which is to say: a real rope is being identified with an unreal snake on account of illusion, and this illusion is nothing else than what we normally call ignorance.

The non-dualism of Trika is quite different from that which Śaṁkara has adumbrated. The *brahman* of Śaṁkara is so peaceful (*śānta*) as to be inactive (*niṣkriya*). The inactive nature of *brahman* is unacceptable to the Trika thinkers. It is against the peaceful *brahman* of Advaita Vedānta that the Trika has expounded a non-dualism that is sufficiently theistic, which is to say that the Absolute of the Trika is not devoid of activity. The Absolute is said to be, on the one hand, of the nature of light of consciousness and, on the other, perfect awareness. As light of consciousness, the Absolute is conceived as being transcendent, which is to say: beyond the reach of mind and intellect, which would, from an epistemic point of view, denote its indefinable character. It is, thus, not possible for

the intellect to formulate such formulations that would terminate in the emergence of knowledge that would make it possible to express conceptually the nature of the Absolute. Since there exists no possibility of knowing the Absolute through conceptual formulations, so the only way of knowing the Absolute is, according to the Trika, self-realization. It is this transcendent aspect of the Absolute that is explained by making use of such terms as, for example, *nirdvandva, nirupādhi.*

However, the Absolute is not so impersonal and indeterminate as to remain beyond the scope of understanding. The Absolute accordingly is conceived as being a unity of light of consciousness (*cit-prakāśa*) and self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśamayatā*). In the language of Trika, it denotes the non-relational awareness in the form of pure "I." It is awareness of itself as "I" that is contained within the term of "I." In conceiving the Absolute as being not merely consciousness (*cit*), but as I-consciousness (*aham-vimarśa*), Trika thereby saves the Absolute from being a mere inert object. Thus Paramaśiva as I-consciousness is not only active, but is knowable that can be known through the medium of knowledge.

अणिमादिगुणावाप्तिः सदैश्वर्यं भवक्षयः।
अमी भव भवद्भक्तिकल्पपादपपल्लवाः॥५६॥

56. **aṇimādiguṇāvāptiḥ**
sadaiśvaryaṁ bhavakṣayaḥ/
amī bhava bhavadbhakti-
kalpapādapapallavāḥ//

Trs.: The attainment of (such miraculous power) as becoming (so small in size) as an atom, etc., endowing of luxuriousness and (bestowing) the freedom from (all) worldliness – these (and similar boons) are the sprouts of the wish-fulfilling tree of thy devotion.

Comment: Lord Śiva is so benign towards his devotee as to possess such innate attributes in terms of which, like the heavenly wish-fulfilling tree, there occurs a shower of boons. It is through intense devotion that the devotee is able, as it were, to have access to the

grace of Lord Śiva, and as a consequence of the fall of divine grace the devotee reaps the gracious fruit in various ways. Accordingly has the loving devotion for the Lord been compared to the heavenly wish-fulfilling tree. The sprouts that the tree gives rise to are considered as representing the attainment of worldly powers, which are said to *aṇimā* (the power to make oneself as small as an atom), *mahimā* (the power of making one's body as large as a mountain), *garimā* (the power of making oneself immeasurably heavy), *laghimā* (the power of making oneself weightless), *prāpti* (the power of being everywhere), *parākāmy* (the power to realize any desire), *īśitva* (the power of gaining lordship over the other), and *vaśītva* (the power of subjugation). Insofar as the flowers of the tree are concerned, they represent such powers of the Lord as would result in the emanation, preservation and dissolution of objectivity. The fruit of the tree of *bhakti* is the realization of the state of non-dual identity with the Lord. The glory of *bhakti*, thus, is to be seen both in the attainment of *bhoga* and *mokṣa*. So the outcome of *bhakti* is same which the heavenly wish-fulfilling tree is expected to bestow upon those who deserve it.

या या दिक्तत्र न क्वासि सर्वः कालो भवन्मयः।
इति लब्धोऽपि कर्हि त्वं लपस्यसे नाथ कथ्यताम्॥५७॥

57. yāyā diktatra na kvāsi
sarvaḥ kālo bhavanmayaḥ/
iti labdho 'pi karhi tvaṃ
lapasyase nātha kathayatāṃ//

Trs.: Are you not (simultaneously) present there, no matter what the direction (in space) be? The entirety of time (as it is) is always one with thee. (And if it so, then tell me), O Lord, as to when will we (be able) to attain thee, (meaning thereby the realization of the state of identity with thee) which (seems) to have already been attained.

Comment: In this verse the Trika doctrine of liberation from the transmigratory bondage of the cycle of rebirth is adumbrated. The

devotee, while keeping the Trika theory of appearance of categories in view, affirms that whatever we objectively perceive as being existing within the frame of space and time is fundamentally non-different from Paramaśiva. When applied to an empirical existent, it would mean that he is non-different from the Absolute, and this assumption is based upon the viewpoint that says that the individual existent is nothing else but the atomic expression of the Absolute, or, should we say that it is the Absolute itself who has reduced itself to the state of an empirical being. While leading the existence that is circumscribed by the limitations imposed by the body, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, is caught up in the web of restraints of space-time, the empirical existent accordingly becomes so subject to forgetfulness as not to remember or know his essential nature. The non-knowing of one's essential nature results in such perceptions that are through and through differentiating, which is to say that all our activities in the world are determined by the sense of difference. It is in the context of the non-recognition of one's essential nature (*svabhāva*) that the Trika has formulated its "doctrine of recognition" (*pratyabhijñā-vāda*). The principles of recognition are so framed as to enable the bound being to recognize his essential nature, which, in other words, means to know himself as to who he essentially is. The term *pratyabhijñā* does not simply mean to "recognize," through recollection or memory, that which one may have forgotten. Recognition is not simply a mental event in terms of which an event of the past is being recognized through the process of recollection. As a philosophic concept, recognition implies a knowledge that concerns itself with the identity of the individual self with the cosmic Self. Recognition basically is a knowledge of the self, and that is why the Trika has defined liberation from bondage to be nothing more than knowing oneself as to what constitutes one's essential nature.

Recognition, as the knowledge of identity, must not be identified either with perception or memory, although both may have a part to play insofar as the arising of recognitive knowledge is concerned. One of the main differences between perception and recognition lies in this: In perception knowledge necessarily is not involved. Even upon perceiving the object we may not know as to what the

object is or what its properties are. In recognition, however, we are able to identify the object, viz., we are in a position to know as to what the object is. It is awareness concerning the identity of the object that terminates in the knowledge of the object. Likewise recognition is different from recollection. Even though it may not be possible to recognize the previously perceived object apart from memory, yet memory is not the same thing as recognition. Memory is such a mental act through which we produce an event or object in the mind that may have been observed or seen in some distant past. Upon reproducing the event in the mind, we never observe the event or see the object in actuality at the time of recollection. In comparison to memory, recognition is such a mental act through which we see the object in actuality. Abhinavagupta explains as to what recognition is by citing an example of a girl who is to be married to a person whom she has not seen at all. Upon hearing that she is going to be married to a particular person, she develops an attitude of love towards this unknown person. She draws a particular kind of picture of her would-be husband in the mind. Once it so happens that she unexpectedly meets him, and, while encountering him, she finds all such traits in him that she had imagined about her husband. She immediately recognizes that this is the person that is going to be her husband. It is the emergence of this unexpected knowledge that is equated with recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 4.2.2). Recognition, thus, is a form of knowledge that certifies the identity of the object that is being recognized.

नमः प्रसन्नसद्वृत्त-मानसैकनिवासिने।
भूरिभूतिसिताङ्गाय महाहंसाय शंभवे॥ ५८॥

58. namaḥ prasannasadvṛtta-
mānaṣaika-nivāsine/
bhūri-bhūti-sitāṅgāya mahā-
haṁsāya śaṁbhave//

Trs.: Prostration unto the Great Swan, called Śambhu, who resides in the (absolutely) pure consciousness of (such) devotees who are

(completely filled with) piety and whose nature is related to the expansive splendour of Māyā.

Comment: The poet equates Lord Śiva with the Great Swan, and it is to this aspect of Śiva to which prostration is made. A swan generally is always to be found in a lake that contains pure water, and in our case Lord Śiva as a swan is said to be residing in the pure waters of the heart. The limbs of the swan are said to be white, and thereby reflecting the utmost purity that is needed wherever it may reside. It is the plain reading of the verse. However, the word *haṁsa* is full of esoteric meaning. The bird swan, in its spiritual aspect, is seen to be embodying such spiritual capacity that has the power of extracting the water from the milk, which would mean that a yogī who has attained the spiritual status of a *haṁsa* has the power of differentiating truth from untruth. It is for this reason that the whiteness of a swan is equated with purity. A heart that is as pure as is the white body of a swan has the power like the swan to have gained the insight into the nature of reality. The other esoteric aspect of the term *haṁsa* is reflected in equating femininity and masculanity with Śiva. The term *haṁsa* is composed *ha, m,* and *sa.* The letter *ha* is said to be representing the principle of masculinity, whereas the letter *sa* is seen to be embodying the principle of femininity. The male principle is equated with Śiva, whereas the embodiment of the feminine principle is said to be Śakti. It is a perspective which understands the nature of the Absolute as being the unity of thesis and antithesis, of Śiva and Śakti, of Being and Becoming, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa.* Since the Absolute, at the conceptual level, is termed as being a synthesis of a pair of opposite, yet, at the level of transcendence, it transcends both. As a synthesis *of coincidentia oppositorum,* it is the conceptual imagery of *ardhanārīśvara* that expresses fully the meaning of reality as being neither male nor female, yet including both the aspects within its inclusivity. There is another esoteric aspect of the term *haṁsa,* which looks at reality from three standpoints. It is the letter *m* that expresses this idea explicitly when it is said to be representing *nara.* It is the triadic nature of reality which is expressed here, and the triad consists of Śiva, Śakti and Nara. It could also be expressed through another triad, namely, *parā, parāparā,* and *aparā.* It is a

viewpoint which maintains that reality can be approached through three standpoints of non-dualism, mono-dualism and dualism, and these three standpoints are to be found in the scriptures termed as Bhairava, Rudra and Śaiva respectively. There is also a yogic perspective attached to this term: *haṁsa*. The term *haṁsa* is identified with a *mantra*, and so accordingly is called *haṁsa mantra*. It is also known as *japājapa*, viz., automatic *japa*. The letter *ha* of this *mantra* represents Śakti, whereas *sa* is seen to be representing Śiva. The letter *m* is the representation of an empirical individual (*jīva*). The outgoing breath (*prāṇa*), at the level of breathing, is equated with Śiva, whereas the incoming breath (*apāna*) is equated with Śakti. It is accordingly known as the *trika-mantra* due to the fact that it represents the three aspects of Paramaśiva, which are: Śiva, Śakti and Nara. While meditating, the adept is asked to concentrate on *m*, because it is considered to be the junction of *ha* and *sa*. This *haṁsa-mantra* is repeated by each one of us when we exhale and inhale. Each repetition of the *mantra* takes 4 seconds, which means that we repeat the *mantra* every minute 15 times. In an hour the repetition of the *mantra* would occur 900 times. Within the span of twenty-four hours we would be repeating this automatic *mantra* – I am He – twenty-one thousand and six hundred times. The other esoteric reading of the *haṁsa* is in terms of it being the embodiment of *ahaṁ*. When *haṁsa* is inverted, it becomes *ahaṁ*, and *ahaṁ* is seen to be the *vimarśa* aspect of reality. It is compared to a mirror in which are reflected the rays of the light, and which contains within itself all the letters of Sanskrit alphabet. It is through the manifest word that the world is perceived in terms of subject and object (*vācaka-vācya*). The term *ahaṁ* is the symbol of the *anuttara*, which is to say: the Transcendent. The letter *ha* of *aham* represents the power of emission (*visarga*), and so is said to be the matrix of all the letters from *a* to *ha*. As *parāmātrika-śakti*, *ahaṁ* embodies the powers of will, knowledge and action. Finally, *ahaṁ* is the perfect symbol of Fullness (*pūrṇatva*).

हतोद्धततमस्तान्तिः प्लुष्टाशेषभवेन्धना।
त्वद्बोधदीपिका मेऽस्तु नाथ त्वद्भक्तिदीपिका॥५९॥

59. hṛtoddhata-tamastāntiḥ
pluṣṭāśeṣa-bhavendhanā/
tvadbodha-dīpikā me'stu
nātha tvadbhakti-dīpikā//

Trs.: Let the candle of thy devotion, O Lord, be the torch-bearer of thy knowledge (precisely because) it has (caused) the destruction of ever-arising (huge) mass of darkness (=ignorance), and has (totally) burnt the fuel-like-world (by reducing it to a heap of white ashes).

Comment: There are, broadly speaking, two contrasting pathways that lead directly to the realization of the Self: One pathway is characterized by *bhakti,* which is to say: by devotional love. The other pathway is seen to be such in which the preponderance is given to knowledge. The candle of devotion is illumined by the oil of love. It is love of and for Paramaśiva that is responsible in igniting the bright light of the lamp. Once the light of love, through its blazing rays, destroys the darkness that may have taken hold of the heart, there immediately follows the experience of the cooling shower of grace. It is through the showers of grace that the devotee is enabled to have the experience of tasting the immortal nectar. The tasting of the divine nectar of love results in such spiritual transfiguration in terms of which the experience of deified identity with the Absolute eventuates. All the shreds of darkness of doubt, or what is called ignorance, are removed by the burning heat of the blazing fire of love. In this manner is reduced the fuel of darkness to a huge heap of ashes. In contrast to this spiritual pathway, we have the pathway of knowledge. While destroying the patches of darkness around us, there still remain the lurking doubts in the mind. The adept, in the process knowing, comes to know that he knows very little. And this process of knowing and not knowing continues *ad infinitum.* It is because of this uncertainty in the pathway of knowledge that the devotee prefers to follow the spiritual path of devotion that seems to overcome every kind of doubtful doubt.

विसृष्टानेकसद्बीजगर्भं त्रैलोक्यनाटकम्।
प्रस्ताव्य हर संहर्तुं त्वत्तः कोऽन्यः कविः क्षमः॥६०॥

60. **visṛṣṭāneka-sadbīja-**
garbhaṃ trailokya-nāṭakaṃ/
prastāvya hara saṁhartuṃ
tvattaḥ ko'nyaḥ kaviḥ kṣamaḥ //

Trs.: Which poet, O Hara, is so empowered, other than thou, as to withdraw the drama of the threefold world introduced by thee, which is (responsible) in having given rise, in its womb, to many shining seeds (such as *māyā, prakṛti*, etc).

Comment: It is by using the analogy of a drama that the emanation, preservation and dissolution of the triadic world is explained. The threefold world consists of *bhur, bhuvaḥ* and *svaḥ* corresponding to the manifest world, to the ethereal world, and to the heavenly world. At the same time the concept of triad also corresponds to the three states of consciousness, which are characterized by waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), and deep sleep (*suṣupti*). The other triad consists of three philosophical viewpoints or standpoints of dualism (*bhedavāda*), mono-dualism (*bhedābhedavāda*), and non-dualism (*abhedavāda*), and these viewpoints are reflected correspondingly in the scriptures called Śaiva Āgamas, Rudra Āgamas and the Bhairava Āgamas. This triad also expresses the ontological status of reality at three levels, which are the lowest (*apara*), the intermediary (*parāpara*), and the highest (*para*). The idea of the triad explains as to how the Word, while descending towards manifestation, passes through the levels of Seeing (*paśyanti*), Middling (*madhyamā*) and the Gross (*vaikharī*).

Insofar as the emanation, preservation and dissolution of the world is concerned, it is compared to the drama that is being played by the actor on the stage. The drama that is played on the stage consists of the following limbs or parts, namely, *upasaṁhāra, prastāvanā, garbha*, and *bīja*. *Upasaṁhāra* represents all such items that are used on the stage by the actors for the successful conclusion of the play. *Prastāvanā* or Introduction is an essential part of Sanskrit

drama. It is that part of the drama in which, along with the actors, a brief introductory information concerning the play is given as well is described the roles that various actors are going to play. This part, prior to the appearance of actors on the stage, represents introduction, whereas the rest is considered to be the part of the play. *Garbha* represents that part of the play when the acting is at its peak, and thereby is explained the rise and fall, through emotion and sentiment, of the characters of the story. Finally, we have *bīja*, which is intended to explain the main goal of the hero, which initially is described laconically. Immediately after the introduction, the seed of the play is sown in such a manner as would lead to the ripening of the fruit in a desired manner and in terms of which the replenishing of the drama could be enhanced. This analogy of drama is used in order to explain as to how the entire play of manifestation of categories has been enacted by the Lord.

नमः सदसतां कर्तुमसत्वं सत्वमेव वा।
स्वतन्त्रायास्वन्त्राय व्ययैश्वर्यैकशालिने॥६१॥

61. **namaḥ sadasatāṃ**
kartumasattvaṃ sattvameva vā/
svatantrāyāsvatantrāya
vyayaiśvaryaikaśāline//

Trs.: Prostration unto Him (Śiva) who, while bringing into existence the non-existent (entities) and vice versa, is in no need of any potentiality (other than himself), and whose splendour of freedom is such as to (cause) the emanation, maintenance, and dissolution (not only of the universe), (but equally) of the subordinates like (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra respectively).

Comment: The Absolute, or what we theologically call Paramaśiva, is not, within the Trika formulation, so indeterminate and impersonal as to have no capacity or power to bring about the manifestation of categories that are seen to be constitutive of phenomena. The Absolute of Trika, in contrast to the *brahman* of

Advaita Vedānta, is a self-conscious being. The Absolute as a self-consciousness consists of two aspects, namely, *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, the former aspect representing the luminosity of consciousness, whereas the latter one the self-cognition or awareness. It is in the context of this view that the powers of will, knowledge and action are ascribed to the Absolute in such a manner as to be innate to it. It is through these powers that the Absolute brings about the manifestation, preservation and dissolution of what has been made manifest. These two aspects of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, from a theological perspective, have been equated with Śiva and Śakti. The Absolute, through its Energy (*śaktī*), expresses itself through five creative processes of emanation (*sṛṣṭī*), maintenance (*sthitī*), dissolution (*saṁhāra*) of the manifest, obscuration (*pidhāna*) and revelation (*anugraha*). This entire process of emanation, preservation and dissolution is carried out through such subordinate deities as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. These five creative processes simultaneously correspond to the five functional powers of the Absolute, which are *cit, ānanda, icchā, jñāna,* and *kriyā*. The first two powers, consciousness and bliss, are not, technically speaking, the powers of the Absolute; they, rather, constitute its essential nature. If seen from a philosophical perspective, these two powers reveal the transcendent nature of the Absolute, and so these two aspects, consciousness and bliss, may not be considered as the stages of manifestation. As the Transcendent is characterized by pure unity, so it is seen to be representing the awareness of pure "I." Accordingly consciousness and bliss are seen to be constituting the essential nature of the Absolute. Insofar as the other three powers are concerned, they are directly related to the process of manifestation of phenomena. The three powers of will, knowledge and action become operational the moment tendency towards phenomenal manifestation in the Absolute arises. The phenomenal manifestation should not be equated to some kind necessity within the Absolute. If necessity were to be ascribed to the Absolute, then he would be a bound-being like us. For the Trika the Absolute is absolutely free; rather Freedom and the Absolute are seen to be such terms that stand for each other. The phenomenal manifestation, according to the Trika terminology,

is the free overflowing of the ecstatic joy that wells up within the Absolute. The emission of the world should be seen as a result of the bliss that is constitutive of the essential nature of the Absolute. This creative emission of the Absolute is conceptually conceived in the form of the Divine Couple, namely, Śiva and Śakti.

त्रैलोक्येऽप्यत्र यो यावानानन्दः कश्चिदीक्ष्यते।
स बिन्दुर्यस्य तं वन्दे देवमानन्दसागरम्॥६२॥

62. **trailokye'pyatra yo yāvān-**
ānandaḥ kaścidīkṣyate/
so binduryasya taṃ vande
devamānandasāgaraṃ//

Trs.: I salute such an Effulgent One who is the ocean of bliss, and the joy that is prevalent here (with regard) to the triad of worlds is only a droplet (from that ocean).

Comment: Paramaśiva is compared to an ocean of bliss, because, on the one hand, he is as immeasurably vast as is an ocean and, on the other hand, the bliss that is contained in that ocean is as unquantifiable as are its waters. Were the Absolute to be devoid of bliss, there would eventuate no manifestation of phenomenal entities. The Absolute, devoid of bliss, would be as blank as a dark patch of absence or like a lifeless stone. The very *raison être* of the world being there is because of bliss. When there is the spilling over of divine bliss, there occurs the inclination (*unmuktā*) within the Lord towards manifesting itself as the universe. It is, thus, bliss that is the cause of the universe. The bliss also encapsulates the Energy of the Lord, and Lord Śiva is inseparable from its Energy. It is the *yāmalabhāva* of Śiva and Śakti that causes the emission of the universe. In this manner we may say that the universe is the emission of the Divine Couple, which is Śiva and Śakti.

अहो ब्रह्मादयो धन्या ये विमुक्तान्यसंकथम्।
नमो नमः शिवायेति जपन्त्याह्लादविह्वलाः॥६३॥

63. aho brahmādayo dhanyā
ye vimuktānya-saṁkathaṃ/
namo namaḥ śivāyeti
japantyāhlādavihvalāḥ//

Trs.: Ah! Blessed are Brahmā and (other deities like Viṣṇu and Rudra on account of having realized thee the Ultimate) and who have discarded (listening) to religious discourses, (and as a result of this, they get) so immersed in (thy) ecstasy as would lead to the recitation of the (holy *mantra*): *namonamaḥśivāya* (repeated prostrations unto Śiva).

Comment: In this verse the significance of reciting a *mantra* as one of the means of realizing the divine bliss is explained by illustrating the example of deities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. These three deities have been given the responsibility of carrying out the operations of emanation of the universe, its sustenance and dissolution, which is performed by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra respectively. By repeating the *mantra* of Śiva, these deities gained access to meditative absorption in terms of which they were blessed with such types of bliss as to be unquantifiable. One of the assertions of the yogis concerning the utterance of this divine *mantra* is this: it is believed that with exhalation (*prāṇa*) and inhalation (*apāna*) the *mantra so'haṁ* (I am That, which is to say: I am Śiva) is automatically uttered. Within 4 seconds there is one utterance of this *mantra,* which means within a span of one minute we recite this *mantra* fifteen times. The total number of recitations of this *mantra* within the span of twenty-four hours occurs 21,600 times. Upon making use of this *mantra* for meditative absorption, an adept gains access to such an immersive absorption as would correspond to the immeasurable depth of the ocean of bliss. It is in the Limited Method (*āṇava-upāya*) and the Method of Energy (*śākta-upāya*) in which the recitation of *mantra* is used as vehicle of reaching the goal of experiencing divine delight. In the former method it is used in terms of its utterance, whereas in the latter method its use is made mentally and is uttered silently within the interior silence.

निष्कामायापि कामानामनंतानां विधायिने।
अनादित्वेऽपि विश्वस्य भोक्त्रे भव नमोऽस्तु ते॥६४॥

64. **niṣkāmāyāpi kāmānām-**
anantānāṃ vidhāyine/
anāditve'pi viśvasya bhoktre
bhava namo' stu te//

Trs.: Salutation unto thee, O Bhava, who, though bereft of desire, is (at the same time) maintainer of infinite desires (of worldly people), and who, though a non-eater (on account of being satiated), yet is (engaged in) in eating (all the food or enjoying) the (whole) of the universe.

Comment: If the Absolute, on the one hand, is said to be transcendent (*niṣkala, anuttara, viśvottīrna*), and thereby Full (*pūrṇa*) in itself, so there is no trace of contradiction to be found in the expression that asserts the nature of the Absolute as being devoid of desires. In the transcendent state of absoluteness of the Absolute such inclinations or tendencies cannot be imputed upon it which we usually find in empirical existents that are limited, and so existing in the state of contraction. A swarm of desires arise in such beings or existents who *per se* are incomplete, and so suffering from lacks or what may be called absences. An emergence of desire in an empirical being should be seen a kind of protest against the feeling of dis-satisfaction. Wherever lack in the form of dissatisfaction is experienced, there the arising of the state of discontentment is bound to occur. It is to pacify this state of discontentment as disenchantment that the arising of desire is a made as tool or means towards this end. Upon the arising of desire in the heart, the individual existent seeks its fulfillment. And sometimes it may not be possible to satisfy all the desires. It is, thus, in such a context that the Lord, although devoid of desires, is said to be fulfilling the desires of devotees. There is another assertion made in the verse, which is that the Lord also is an enjoyer. How can we maintain that the Absolute is an enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*) in the context of the assertion that he is devoid of desires?

If it is accepted that the Absolute is also the enjoyer, then he would be nothing more than a finite being. The experiencing of pleasure would be responsible in causing change (*vikāra*) in the Absolute. If change is ascribed to the Absolute, then it would not be different from the objects of Nature that undergo change, in one form or the other, constantly, and thereby suffer from the finitude of temporality. Since the Lord is atemporal, so accordingly we will have to agree with the principle that says that the Lord is unchangeable. However, the ascription of "enjoyer" to the Lord means that the Lord, within the philosophical formulation, is never to be found separate from its Energy, which is to say: from its cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*). And *vimarśa* is considered to be representing the potential state of objectivity prior to its manifestation. It is in the universal consciousness in which the unmanifest objectivity exists potentially. In this manner Śiva as *prakāśa* enjoys continuously his inseparable Energy, which is nothing else but *vimarśa*. As and when Śiva reposes on itself, which is to say on its *vimarśa,* then such reposing is termed as the pleasure *(bhoga)* of Śiva. Moreover, the universe in its manifest form is nothing else but the expansion of Śiva's Śakti, which is identical with *vimarśa*. There is another aspect of Paramaśiva which says that that the Lord is the enjoyer (*bhokta*) and not the enjoyed (*bhogya*). Well, it may be true at the transcendental level of thought, but not at the immanent level. The Trika cosmological view is this: The universe is nothing but the self-extension or self-form (*svarūpa*) of Paramaśiva itself, which would mean that it is Paramaśiva itself who is manifest in both the conditions: which is to say that it is Paramaśiva himself who himself is both the subject and the object, which is to say that Paramaśiva as the subject is the enjoyer, but as an object it is Paramaśiva himself who enjoys himself.

स्तुमस्त्रिभुवनारम्भमूलप्रकृतिमीश्वरम्।
लिप्सेरन्नोपकारं के यतः संपूर्णधर्मणः॥६५॥

65. stumastribhuvanārambha-
mūlaprakṛtim-īśvaraṃ/

lipserannopakāraṃ ke yataḥ
sampūrṇadharmaṇaḥ//

Trs.: As everyone is desirous of beneficence from him (Śiva), who is of perfect nature, so we (accordingly) offer our invocations unto the Lord, who is (said to be) the primordial cause of the threefold world.

Comment: It is established in the verse that Lord Śiva is, first and foremost, Fullness (*sampūrṇaṃ*) in itself, and so lacks nothing. It is the Fullness of Lord Śiva that establishes the fact that he is not only the Lord of the worlds, but is the primordial cause of whatever exists in the manifest condition. The Trika cosmology is of the view that there are three worlds, and those worlds are represented by the physical world of ours, the ethereal world, and the heavenly world. All these three worlds (*tribhuvana*) owe their origin to the free will (*svātantrya*) of the Lord. It is, thus, the principle of free will (*svātantrya-siddhānta*) that is seen in Trika Śaivism as being the basic cause of the universe. Paramaśiva emits the universe out of itself the moment he wills its manifestation. The willing of the manifestation of the universe is equated with the divine sport or playfulness. To be playful is one of the essential features of Lord Śiva. Paramaśiva, while giving rise to the categories of existence (*tattva*-s) out of itself, is completely independent in engaging himself in this creative activity. As Lord Śiva emits every category out of itself, so it is assumed that every category, prior to emission, must necessarily be existing within him as a potency. This idea of an entity existing as a potency, prior to its manifestation, in the cause is directly borrowed from the causal doctrine of Sāṁkhya called *satkāryavāda*. Since Lord Śiva is seen to be the cause of the universe, so this universe, according this theory, must have been existing potentially in the cause, which in our case is Śiva. In other words, it means that the effect (*kārya*) is nothing but the manifest condition of the cause (*kāraṇa*). It amounts to saying that the entire universe exists as the self of Śiva, which is to say that the universe, in its potential state, must be seen as existing as the infinite and eternal "I." This divine Ego as consciousness is not so passive as to be inert. It is, rather, pulsating continuously with the

divine throb. It is on account of this throbbing nature of consciousness that the divine creative activity is actualized. The Sāṁkhya causal doctrine has to be viewed in the context of its doctrine of "primordial nature" (*mūlaprakṛti*). It is the "root-nature" or "primordial nature" that is considered to be constituting the substratum of the universe. In its Trika version, it is Nature as such (*prakṛti*) that is seen to be the first primary effect of *kalā*, which is one of the products of Māyā. This Primordial Nature is said to be characterized by three attributes (*guṇa*-s), and these attributes are goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and inertia *(tamas)*. Prior to the evolution of *prakṛti* into various evolutes, these attributes exist in perfect harmony. It is upon disturbing the equilibrium of these attributes that Nature as such evolves itself into various categories that are constitutive of what, within the Trika formulation, is called the "impure order of manifestation" (*aśuddhādhva*). This disturbance in the equilibrium of attributes, according to Trika theology, is caused Svatantreśa or Ananta. This disturbance in the harmonious co-existence is given rise to for the sake of actualizing the manifest condition of the universe.

महत्स्वप्यर्थकृच्छ्रेषु मोहौघमलिनीकृताः।
स्मृते यस्मिन् प्रसीदन्ति मतयस्तं शिवं स्तुमः॥६६॥

66. mahatsvapyarthakṛcchreṣu
mohaughamalinīkṛtāḥ/
smṛte yasmin prasīdanti matayastaṃ
śivaṃ stumaḥ//

Trs.: We prostrate unto such Śiva whose (mere) remembrance causes the purification of (such) intellects that have been polluted by the (sheer) density of Māyā in considering the world as an adversary.

Comment: It is on account of the emergence of the category of Māyā that the sense of limitation as well as of difference is made operational within *puruṣa*. Once Māyā, through its five veiling sheaths, brings *puruṣa* into the ambit of its influence, *puruṣa* thereby

is deluded by considering himself as being limited insofar as the field of knowing and doing is concerned. It is because of this reason that the principle of *māyā* has been equated with delusion (*moha*), and as a deluding force, it obscures the divine nature of the Lord. The process of manifestation of categories from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā is completely free from the impact of Māyā. It is so because the manifestation of Māyā occurs after Śuddhavidyā. It is on account of this that the first five categories, viz., from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, are considered to be belonging to the "pure course of manifestation" (*śuddhādhva*). It is at the level of Māyā where, due to the intervention of Anantanātha, the simple "thisness" begins to objectify itself through the emergence of the five veiling sheaths (*kañcuka*-s) of Māyā. It is on account of these five veiling sheaths that the essential nature of the Lord is concealed, and it is as a contracted existent that the Lord experiences limitation of every kind within the continuum of space-time. It is due to the expansion of Māyā into five sheaths that the infinite I-consciousness manifests itself as limited *puruṣa*. In this manner is infinite I-consciousness reduced to the finitude of temporality. Accordingly the limited elements of "this-ness" begin to shine in terms of what is known as *prakṛti* or "primordial nature." Due to the influence exerted by Anantanātha, *prakṛti* evolves itself into mental and physical categories. In this manner is *prakṛti* seen as the substratum of evolutes that evolve out it.

प्रभो भवत एवेह प्रभुशक्तिरभङ्गुरा।
यदिच्छया प्रतायेते त्रैलोक्यस्य लयोदयौ॥६७॥

67. prabho bhavata eveha
prabhuśaktirabhaṅgurā/
yadicchayā pratāyete
trailokyasya layodayau//

Trs.: O Lord, thy energy of freedom is (such as) cannot be broken (precisely because) it is thy mere will that causes the emergence and dissolution of the three worlds.

Comment: One of the important contributions of Kashmir Śhaivism towards the development of philosophical thought is its concept concerning the Absolute as being identical with Freedom (*svātantrya*). In perceiving the Absolute as being absolutely free insofar as the operation of will is concerned, the Trika Śaivism thereby has, as it were, overcome the barriers which causal determinism gives rise to. The freedom of will of the Absolute is interpreted in such a manner as would overcome the deficiency that is found in the causal doctrine of the Sāṁkhya, namely, the doctrine of *satkāryavāda.* According to this causal theory of the Sāṁkhya, it is adumbrated that the cause, while giving rise to an effect, gets itself totally destroyed. This total destruction of the cause is, for example, to be found in the seed when it, while giving rise to a plant, get destroyed itself. If this doctrine of causality, without any modification, is applied to Paramaśiva, it would mean that Paramaśiva, while emitting the universe out of itself, must necessarily meet its end in destruction. If Paramaśiva as cause would be destroyed in the process of emanation of the universe, then there would exist no such a transcendent principle apart from which no entity has the possibility to exist. It is a kind of causality which is determinate and fixed. As there is no element of freedom in it, so its course cannot be changed. In order to avoid causal determinacy, the Trika thought has postulated the doctrine of the freedom of will of Paramaśiva in the context of emanation and dissolution of the universe. It is in the context of the doctrine of freedom that in the verse is pointed out the absolute freedom of Paramaśiva concerning the emanation and dissolution of the threefold worlds. When the Lord appears in the form of the world, there does not occur any disappearance of the powers of the Lord. The Lord remains as the Lord in both the conditions of emanation and dissolution of objectivity. There occurs the emanation of categories from Śiva to Earth and of such entities therein as the subject, the mean of knowledge, and the object as well as of such diversity that is constitutive of phenomena when, through its own autonomous free will (*svecchā*), the powers of the Absolute are reflected in its own mirror. Likewise occurs, through the autonomy of will of the Absolute, the dissolution of this entire manifest order

(*prapañca*). The process of emanation/dissolution, within the Trika thinking, cannot be equated with the Sāṁkhya causal doctrine of change or transformation. The Absolute, while giving rise to objectivity, neither undergoes any kind of change nor transformation. The world of objectivity is, rather, reflected by the Cosmic Consciousness in its own mirror. In this manner are avoided the logical defects that are to be found in the determinate causal doctrine of the Sāṁkhya. It is the autonomous self-will of Paramaśiva that is responsible in actualizing the manifest order. Paramaśiva is not dependent upon such external supports as the "primordial nature" or atoms for the purpose of effecting the manifestation of objectivity (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.5.7). The powers of Paramaśiva, though non-dual, express themselves as being diverse, through the process of reverse order, in the form of such categories as the primordial nature, atoms and the knowable objects.

कुकर्मापि यमुद्दिश्य देवं स्यात्सुकृतं परम्।
सुकृतस्यापि सौकृत्यं यतोऽन्यत्र न सोऽसि भोः॥ ६८॥

68. kukarmāpi yamuddiśya
devaṁ syātsukṛtaṃ param/
sukṛtasyāpi saukṛtyaṃ yato
'nyatra na so'si bhoḥ//

Trs.: O, thou art such a Shining One as would transform the most heinous actions into the supreme good, and (accordingly) the goodness of the good has no existence apart from thee.

Comment: The thrust of the argument of the verse is as to what it is that should be seen as the source of the good. The source of the good, according to the above verse, is none else than Lord Śiva itself. The doctrine contains two viewpoints concerning the good that flows from the men of goodness: one viewpoint asserts that there is the flow of good actions only from such a person who is so infused by divine consciousness as to be the perfect icon of goodness. This good exists in the person not because of his own

doing; it exists in him precisely because of having encountered divinity, and as a consequence of this encounter, there eventuates such spiritual transformation in the individual existent as to have natural tendency towards that which is good. This spiritual transformation in the life of an individual may be compared to such a radical transformative change as is evidenced in milk when it transforms itself into curd. The flow of actions from such a spiritually transformed person would have necessarily to be so good as to be illuminative. This viewpoint would maintain that it is largely the self-effort that is responsible in ushering in the individual being the inclination towards the good. The other viewpoint would be that it is the divine will which, through the operation of grace, should be seen as the cause for the actualization of goodness within an individual existent. This viewpoint would maintain that nothing moves, not even a blade of grass, without the consent of divine will. If everything moves in the world in accordance with the will of the Lord, then the question arises as to who should be seen as the source of evil. Kashmir Śhaivism would, with full responsibility, maintain that there actually neither exists good nor evil. Good and evil are relative terms, and would seemingly be operational to the measure conceptual and perceptual differentiating dualism is operational. Upon the realization of the non-dual state of identity, there, thus, is eliminated the very source of dualism, which is ignorance. Ignorance is there on account of impurity, and so it would mean that the eradication of ignorance comes to be with the removal of impurity. The removal of impurity results in such a spiritual awareness in terms of which is realized the non-dual nature of the Absolute, and thereby the question of good and evil also vanishes.

एष मुष्टया गृहीतोऽसि दृष्ट एष क्व यासि नः।
इति भक्तिरसाध्माता धन्या धावन्ति धूर्जटिम्॥६९॥

69. eṣa muṣṭyā gṛhīto'si
dṛṣṭa eṣa kva yāsi naḥ/
iti bhaktirasādhmātā dhanyā
dhāvanti dhūrjaṭiṃ//

Trs.: Since thou have been held (tightly) by the fist, and (accordingly) have been visualized as having become ours, (and being ours) where will thou go? In this manner it is the devotional nectar that has enlightened the consciousness of the devotee, and so blessed is the devotee who runs after the One who has matted hair (*dhūrjaṭa*), and (such a devotee) really is commendable!

Comment: In this verse a simple fact of devotional love for the Lord is stated, which is: Inwardly are shining with spiritual glow such devotees who are saturated with the droplets of devotional love for the Lord. These devotees know perfectly well that they are inwardly shining with spiritual glow precisely because they have held the Lord so tightly in their fist as not to allow him to escape from their grip, which is to say that the distance between the Lord and the devotee has completely been overcome in terms of the experience of identity. As a result of this experience of identity, the devotee accordingly is so empowered as to have the vision of the Lord. Since spiritual intimacy in terms of oneness has been established, so the devotee is able to affirm that Lord Śiva is so trapped in his mind as would have no possibility for him to run away. It is due to the experience of abiding of the Lord in the heart that the devotee is shining with divine splendour inwardly.

स्तुमस्त्वामृग्यजुः साम्नां शुक्रतः परतः परम्।
यस्य वेदात्मिकाज्ञेयमहो गम्भीर सुन्दरी॥७०॥

70. stumastvāmṛgyajuḥ sāmnāṁ
śukrataḥ parataḥ paraṃ/
yasya vedātmikājñeyam-
aho gambhīrasundarī//

Trs.: We invoke thee, (O Lord), (on account of having the capacity) to transcend the (splendid) effulgence of the (three) Vedas–Ṛk, Yājus and Saman, while (at the same time) issuing (such authoritative) ordinances, in the form of the Vedas, that are (both) profound and blissful.

Comment: As the transcendent Lord, you shine in all the three

Vedas as the Light of Lights (*lumen de lumen*). Also it is in and through these Vedic texts that thou issue such ordinances that are so authoritative as to be final. Since there is the possibility of knowing you in your transcendence, so it is in the form of Light of consciousness that you reveal yourself. It amounts to saying that the Absolute, no matter what the condition may be, is always experienced in the form of consciousness (*saṁvid-rūpa*), which means that there does not arise a situation when the Absolute is not of the nature of consciousness. Even when appearing in insentient objects, the Absolute does not deviate from its essential nature of being consciousness. The very existential status of the object is affirmed only when there is reflected, within the consciousness of an individual, the reflection of the object, which means that the object exists only when it is perceived. However, the perception of an object would be an impossibility if consciousness as light would not reveal it. This proves that nothing exists apart from consciousness, and so it would mean that everything is pervaded by consciousness. The object, thus, becomes one with consciousness when it is cognized. It is so because it is this very consciousness that reflects itself as the object in terms of its appearance. If it were not consciousness that reflected the object in its own mirror, then there would be no appearance of the object. Such assertion is made on the basis that it is the very nature of consciousness to appear. It would mean that the so-called objectivity, in fact, is nothing but the manifest form of consciousness.

विधिरादिस्तथान्तोऽसि विश्वस्य परमेश्वर।
धर्मग्रामः प्रवृत्तो यस्त्वत्तो न स कुतो भवेत्॥७१॥

71. **vidhirādistathānto'si**
viśvasya parameśvara/
dharmagrāmaḥ pravṛtto yas-
tvatto na sa kuto bhavet//

Trs.: Thou alone, O Lord, art the origin as well as the fruit of all the injunctions. If it is not thee, then from where does the prevalent multiplicity of the universe originate?

Comment: It is *a priori* asserted that whatever regulations, in the form of injunctions, are contained in the sacred texts, all of them owe their origin to thee alone. It is an assumption which is based on the hypothesis that sees the ultimate source of the universe in Paramaśiva, who, in theological language, is equated with the metaphysical Absolute. This Absolute as Paramaśiva is considered to be the ultimate source of the universe on account of it being in possession of such creative powers through which the emanation of the manifest order is actualized. The divine display of powers of the Lord express themselves through the five functional processes or acts (*pañcakṛtya*), which have been identified with the five powers – and they are those of emanation (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*), dissolution (*saṁhāra*), obscuration (*pidhāna*), and revelation (*anugraha*) (see *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*, p.1: *namaḥśivāyasatatam-pañcakṛtya-vidhāyine/cid-ānanda-ghana-svātma-parmārtha-avabhāsane*). The Lord engages in the activity of emanation of objectivity the moment he reflects within himself the objective universe as if it is existing apart from him. Such an act of the Lord may be considered as being of the nature of basic emanation of objectivity. The basic emanation of objectivity occurs in the form of "thisness" (*idaṃ*), which is to say that the appearance of objectivity does not yet take place in terms of separate entities. The continuation of the manifest order in terms of its preservation has to be seen within the context of the universal norm – and this activity of the Lord is known as the play of preservation. Upon preserving the world for the destined period, the Lord engages in such an activity which is considered to be the reverse side of emanation, namely, dissolution. In the process of emanation, preservation and dissolution the Lord appears in the form of a limited being (*paśu*). As a result of this, the Lord, in the form of a limited being, forgets his essential nature as being identical with Paramaśiva. This process of forgetting, and thereby concealing the transcendent nature, is such an activity of the Lord that is termed as being equal to concealment (*pidhāna*). Finally, the limited being, through the study of the scriptures as well as due to the grace of *guru*, is so inspired as would lead him on to the path of spirituality. It is through this spiritual journey that the limited being gains the possibility of recognizing his

essential nature. This act of the Lord is known as the act of revelation/grace.

नमस्ते भवसम्भ्रान्त-भ्रान्तिमुद्भाव्य भिन्दते।
ज्ञानानन्दं च निर्द्वन्द्वं देव वृत्वा विवृण्वते॥७२॥

72. **namaste bhava-saṁbhrānta-**
bhrāntimudbhāvya bhindate/
jñānānandaṃ ca nirdvandvaṃ
deva vṛttvā vivṛnvate//

Trs.: Salutation unto thee, the Effulgent Lord, who is (responsible) of making delusion to emerge to delude the (worldly) people, and (afterwards) dispels it, and (in the same manner) thou, while concealing the non-dual bliss of pure consciousness (from people of lowest nature), reveals it (to those that are devoted to thee).

Comment: The verse explains the glorious divine powers of the Lord in terms of which, on the one hand, the emanation, preservation and dissolution of the objective universe is carried out and, on the other, the acts of concealment of the essential nature and the revelation/grace are enacted. The Lord, while giving rise to the universe, brings into being such a deluding power, through the category of Māyā, as would delude people in general. It is Anantanātha who initiates change in the category of Māyā, and thereby facilitates the emergence of such veiling entities (*kañcuka*-s) as *kalā, kāla, rāga, vidyā, niyati.* Upon the emergence of the veiling entities, Anantanātha initiates the emergence of the limited subject (*puruṣa*) as well as of the material Nature (*prakṛti*). Once the limited existent occupies its space in the manifest order, there, then, begins to function the deluding power called *māyā.* The function of this deluding power is to delude people in such a manner as to be bereft of self-knowledge (*ātma-bodha*). It gives rise to the cognition of difference in the subject (*pramātā*). It is also seen as a veiling power (*tirodhāna-śakti*) of Śiva, viz., it is such a power by which one's essential nature is concealed. Upon descending down to the category of Māyā, Śiva thereby assumes,

out of his own free will, the state of limitation, and in terms of which he perceives his subjectivity, viz., the "I" (*aham*) as being different from everything that is being perceived out there. In this manner the undifferentiated nature of Paramaśiva is so concealed as to give rise to perceptions that are grounded in difference. As a result of this concealment of one's essential nature, the limited subject experiences everything as existing different from the self. It is at this level of difference that there occurs the appearance of the subject in the form of *puruṣa* and that of objectivity in the form of *prakṛti*. Thus eventuates the sense of difference between the subject and the subject, between the object and the object. It is this phenomenal diversity which comes into being on account of the category of Māyā. And the perceptions that would occur henceforward would be conceptual, and conceptual knowledge is equated to delusion (*bhrānti*) on account of it not corresponding to reality. According to the above verse, it is Lord Śiva who is responsible in giving rise to this delusional knowledge. If the Lord is considered to be the cause of delusional knowledge, it is the same Lord who, through grace (*anugraha*), removes the cataract of delusion from the mind of those who are intensely devoted to him, while depriving the people of the lowest nature of this revelation. As the embodiment of compassion, the Lord does not neglect his devotee, but, rather, showers upon him the flowers of grace.

यस्याः प्राप्येत पर्यन्तविशेषः कैर्मनोरथैः।
मायामेकनिमेषेण मुष्णंस्तां पातु नः शिवः॥७३॥

73. yasyāḥ prāpyeta paryanta-
viśeṣaḥ kairmanorathaiḥ/
māyāmekanimeṣeṇa muṣṇaṁstāṁ
pātu naḥ śivaḥ//

Trs.: May (such) Śiva protect us who is (so empowered as to) dispel the (spells) of Māyā in an instant and whose range cannot (easily) be crossed (on account of it being) inconceivable through mental processes.

Comment: The Trika understanding of the concept of *māyā* is quite different from that of Advaita Vedānta of Śaṁkara. For Śaṁkara *māyā* is not only unthinkable (*acintya*), but equally also is inexpressible (*anirvācanīya*). It would mean that we can neither speak of it as existing nor as non-existing. *Māyā* as an elusive power is seen to be existing when it, for example, gives rise to an illusion. When, for example, a snake is perceived in a rope, which means that rope is wrongly been perceived as a snake, we are in the realm of *māyā*. During the period of the existence of illusion, which is to say: of *māyā*, we cannot deny its existence. When, however, illusion is negated through the process of right knowledge, there occurs simultaneously its disappearance. Prior to the negation, *māyā* is seen to be existing, but its disappearance would entail its non-existence, which would mean that only such entities have the possibility of being negated that are unreal, and thereby non-existent. It is such a befalling situation in which we can neither affirm its existence nor can equally deny. In contrast to this kind of understanding, Trika Śaivism affirms the existence of *māyā* as being real. Trika sees *māyā* as representing such power of obscuration through which is initiated the process of concealment of the essential nature of Śiva itself. It is Śiva himself who conceals his own essential nature as being divine. It is the freedom of will (*svecchā*) of Śiva itself that is responsible in causing self-obscuration, and the self-obscuration occurs due to the power of *māyā* (*māyā-śakti*). This is how Abhinavagupta has explained the Trika concept of sovereign will or the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) of the Lord: "There the Lord, Paramaśiva, whose own-being is consciousness of the nature of *prakāśa and vimarśa,* who is undeniable, ever-present reality, appears as a subject from *Rudra* down to immovable entities, as objects like blue, pleasure, etc., which appear as if separate, though in essence they are not separate, through the glorious might of *svātantrya,* which is inseparable from *saṁvid* and which does not conceal in any way the real nature of the Supreme. This is the exposition of *svātantrya-vāda."* (Quoted in Jaideva Singh, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ,* p.17). It is, thus, Paramaśiva itself who, out of its own free will, both conceals and reveals his essential nature. It is this Śiva of absolute freedom to whom prayer is offered that he may protect us from every side. The Lord makes use of *māyā* to

conceal his essential nature, and this he does willingly. It would mean that it is on account of the *svātantrya* of the Lord that *māyā* as a concealing agency becomes operational. It is also on account of freedom that the Lord reveals his essential nature through the descent of grace. Both these activities of concealment and revelation are enacted by the Lord simply to engage in a playful sport.

वैराग्यस्य गतिं गुर्वीं ज्ञानस्य परमां श्रियम्।
नैः स्पृह्यस्य परां कोटिं बिभ्रतां त्वं प्रभो प्रभुः॥७४॥

74. vairāgyasya gatiṃ guruvīṃ
jñānasya paramāṃ śriyaṃ/
naiḥspṛhyasya parāṃ koṭiṃ
bibhratāṃ tvaṃ prabho prabhuḥ//

Trs.: Thou, O Lord, art the lord (and master) of those (devotees) who have reached the ultimate point of detachment, which is the ultimate splendour of (emancipatory) wisdom, and (final) perfection of (what is called) dispassion.

Comment: It is pointed out in the verse as to how important role is played by detachment and dispassion insofar as the evolution of one's spiritual life is concerned. A devotee who successfully has detached himself from every kind of attachment may easily step into the spiritual stage of dispassion. The cultivation of detachment and dispassion are seen to be the two pillars upon which the entire edifice of spirituality stands. It is maintained that the mind will remain in the state of restlessness and of distraction till calm is not restored. And calm of the mind will emerge only upon the cessation of various dispositions of the mind, and the nature of the disposition could be distraction, restlessness, stupefaction, misperception, and so on so forth. Detachment is actualized when the senses are withdrawn from their respective objects. In this manner is so interiorized consciousness as would result in cutting asunder the contact with the external world. Subsisting in itself, an individual being attains such a state of dispassion whereby he is affected by nothing. He becomes indifferent to both heat and cold, pain and

pleasure. Once the cultivation of dispassion and detachment become a part and parcel of one's spiritual life, there then flows forth such wisdom as would lead directly to the realization of the Divine. This realization of the Divine emerges in the devotee who has attained the perfect state of detachment and dispassion, and who, above all, is endowed with wisdom that leads to the comfort of being under the protection of the Lord.

ब्रह्मणोऽपि भवान्ब्रह्म कस्य नेशस्त्वमीशितुः।
जगत्कल्याणकल्याणं कियत्त्वमिति वेत्ति कः॥७५॥

75. **brahmaṇo'pi bhavānbrahma**
kasya neśastvamīśituḥ/
jagatkalyāṇakalyāṇaṃ
kiyattvamiti vetti kaḥ//

Trs.: (On account of the power of freedom) thou art the *brahman* of *brahman*. (As such) there is no ruler that is not ruled by thee. Who has the (power or capacity) of (measuring) cognitively thy greatness when thou art the (substratum) of all the goodness of the world.

Comment.: The *brahman* of Śaṁkara is so peaceful (*śānta*) as to be devoid of any movement or throb. On account its peaceful nature, it is accordingly unable to act in any manner. It is against this view of *brahman* of Śaṁkara that the Trika Śaivas have conceived the Absolute as being of the nature of light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) as well as being characterized by self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*). What it amounts to saying is that the Absolute as consciousness does not simply shine (*prakāśayate*) with its effulgent light, but is equally aware (*vimarśana*) of itself as being of the nature of light. As light of consciousness, the Absolute of Trika establishes itself as being so transcendent as to be beyond the reach of the mind and the intellect. The Absolute is seen, on account of it being transcendent, the epitome of freedom (*svātantrya*). It is the absolute freedom of Paramaśiva that makes it to be the *brahman* of *brahman*, as the ruler of all the rulers, which thereby establishes its sovereign nature. The Absolute is not only transcendent, but is

also endowed with reflective awareness. It is such an Absolute who is considered to be the substratum of all that that exists within the realm of the manifest order. The cognitive awareness of Paramaśiva is equated with the absolute freedom, which expresses itself in and through the power of will (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.2.4).

It is through this concept of self-will through which the concept of absolute freedom is expressed, and which is equated with the infinite bliss in terms of the five powers of emanation, preservation, dissolution, concealment and revelation/grace. It is in terms of cognitive awareness that the Absolute is being spoken of in terms of the "fullness of I" (*pūrṇāhantā*). The lordship of the power of the Lord is termed as independence (*svatantratā*). It is Paramaśiva alone who enacts the play of emanation and dissolution of the universe. If the Absolute were not autonomous, then nothing will happen in the universe. The wonderful diversity of the universe owes its being to the absolute autonomy of the Absolute. Being sovereignly independent, it means that the Absolute is not ruled over by anyone; rather it is Paramaśiva who rules over everyone, which is to say: none can escape from being ruled by Paramaśiva. Also being independent, Paramaśiva accordingly is the source of all that that is good in the world. The world as a harmonious whole represents the gracefulness of the Lord.

किमन्यैर्बन्धुभिः किं च सुहृद्भिः स्वामिभिस्तथा।
सर्वस्थाने ममेश त्वं य उद्धर्ता भवार्णवात्॥७६॥

76. kim-anyair-bandhubhiḥ kiṁ
ca suhṛdbhiḥ svāmibhistathā/
sarvasthāne mameśa tvaṃ ya
uddhartā bhavārṇavāt //

Trs.: Since, O Lord, thou, who lifts (the devotees) out from the transmigratory ocean, art always mine, so of what use are other relatives (to me); of what use, again, are friends, and, likewise, what have I to do with other masters (worldly or otherwise).

Comment: Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has realized a stark fact of life-in-the-

world that he is so caught up in the endless web of transmigration as to be unable to find out the way of escape from this painful process of becoming. This world of becoming is compared to an ocean, which is so deep as to be bottomless. It is in this bottomless ocean in which he finds himself so drowned as to be unable to swim. It is the inability of crossing over the ocean of becoming which points out the contingent and fragile nature of empirical existence. It is in the midst of this solitary realization of abandonment that an individual comes to know that there exists no dependable truth upon which he may depend in times of crisis. The nearest dependable entities upon which one may try to depend are one's parents, friends, relatives, and so on. But these entities are as much floating upon the waters of the ocean of becoming as is he himself. Whether it be parents, friends or relatives, all of them go through the same process of life as oneself. They are born, grow up, suffer from old age and disease, and ultimately die. The changing process of life proves that nothing is stable and fixed in the world. It is the finitude of nothingness that seems to be hovering over life as such. It is because of this reason that life is compared to the ocean. As the waters of the ocean have no stability on account of them being on the move, so it is natural to compare empirical existence to the flowing waves of the ocean. So the contingent nature of life establishes the fact that everything in the world, including our relationships, are as infirm as are the dew-drops on a petal. It is this finitude, in the form of change and infirmity, that is seen to constitute the essence of our contingent existence. The only firm and unchanging relationship that one find in the midst of this changing world is the one that exists between Lord Śiva and the bound individual. It is Paramaśiva alone who, according to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, is the lasting refuge of all those who are in search of a permanent refuge.

जयन्ति मोहमायादि-मलसंक्षालनक्षमाः।
शैवयोगबलाकृष्टा दिव्यपीयूषविप्रुषः॥७७॥

77. **jayanti mohamāyādi-**
mala-saṁkṣālanakṣamāḥ/

śaiva-yoga-balākṛṣṭāḥ
divya-pīyūṣa-vipruṣaḥ//

Trs.: Glory be to the droplets of nectar or (bliss/knowledge), which have emerged on account of the union with Śiva (*śaivayoga*), and which are so (powerful) as to (cause) the purification of impurities of ignorance, (namely, of *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala*).

Comment: In the verse is expressed glorious gratitude to such divine droplets of nectar which have the capacity of destroying the three impurities that are seen to be the cause of ignorance (*avidyā, ajñāna*). It is this ignorance, born of impurities, that is seen to be the cause of suffering that an individual existent undergoes while moving on from one form of life to another. That devotee of the Lord is fortunate who, while following the trajectory of spirituality, gains access to the droplets of nectar, and by drinking these immortal droplets of wisdom, he thereby is able to wash off the dust of impurities that might have accumulated while travelling the uncharted course of transmigratory existence. The triad of impurities, *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala,* and *kārma-mala,* are responsible in prolonging the cycle of rebirth by giving rise to ignorance that creates impediments in the spiritual path that could prevent an individual from reaching the goal of freedom from bondage, which is to say: From the cycle of rebirth. As to what these debilitating impurities are may be known from the following analysis of impurities: *Āṇava-mala:* The term *āṇava* means that which is limited on account of it being of atomic nature. The function of this impurity is to reduce the cosmic consciousness to the level of individualized consciousness, which means that the cosmic aspect of consciousness is being confined to the limitations of space and time. The very confinement of consciousness to the temporal structure means the curtailment of freedom to function with regard to knowledge and action. As a result of this curtailment of freedom, the empirical individual experiences every kind of incompleteness (*apūrṇatva*). It is this minutest impurity, called *āṇava-mala,* which gives rise to the sense of imperfection (*apūrṇa-mannam-manyatā*) (cf. *Tantrāloka,* 9.62,65; also see 6.73–80). This interpretation of human imperfection as a reduction to the state

of constructed ego raises the following question: How is it possible for consciousness to become so limited as to be identified with the empirical ego? The response of the Trika concerning this question is this: It is not consciousness which, according to the Trika thought, has become limited precisely because it is not possible for the unlimited to become limited. Instead of consciousness becoming limited, it is the empirical ego (*aṇu*) which, on account of ignorance, identifies erroneously the supreme consciousness with the limitations of the psychophysical construct called ego, or, should we say with that that is not-self (*anātman*). The experience of being a limited ego is explained in terms of a dream analogy. It is possible for a king, for example, to become a beggar in a dream. The dream experience of the king as a beggar, however, does not make him a beggar, because there is no factual correspondence between what is real and what is being dreamt. While in the state of dream, the king mistakenly thinks of himself as having become a beggar. Likewise the individual existent, while being under the influence of ignorance, thinks mistakenly of himself of having become a limited being (*Tantrāloka-viveka,* 9.62).

To experience oneself as being so limited as to be under the restraints of space-time determinism can mean the loss of freedom, which is to say that an empirical being is not allowed to function independently. The loss of freedom expresses itself either in terms of consciousness being dependent or being not at all conscious of freedom. The Trika explains this situation as representing the conditioned nature of empirical existence in terms of the absence of absolute freedom. In addition to the loss of freedom, this impurity of limitation also debilitates the individual existent to the extent that it remains unaware of what freedom is. Both the loss and non-recognition of freedom are so interdependent as to be inseparable, which is say that one has no possibility to exist apart from the other (*Tantrāloka,* 9.62: *aṇunāmlolikānama...*).

The second impurity is given the nomenclature of *māyīya-mala.* This impurity as an adjective of *māyā* denotes that which pertains to *māyā.* As to what *māyā* is in itself is, within the Trika formulation, explained as being such a force that gives rise to the sense of difference (*bheda*), which goes contrary to the philosophical notion

of reality as being non-dual. From the absolute standpoint (*paramārtha-sattā*), the nature of reality is said to be non-dual (*abheda*), and so the so-called diversity does not in actuality exist. The experience of difference must be treated, according to the non-dualistic point of view, as being nothing more nor less than a mere optical illusion. It means, in epistemological terms, of misidentifying the unreal as the real, or should we say that the process of misidentification consists of in superimposing the unreal upon the real. This impurity accordingly gives rise to the experience of difference by allowing the restricted individual to think of himself as being essentially different from every existent entity. This sense of difference, in ontological terms, is experienced in terms of the hiatus between the Absolute and the limited individual. And the impurity that is responsible in giving birth to the sense of difference is called *māyīya-mala* (ibid., 1.30).

The third impurity is known as that of action (*kārma*). The arising of this impurity is dependent upon one's inclinations and equally upon one's lacks. In contrast to impure action (*kārma-mala*), we have an action (*kriyā*) which is spontaneous, and so is not dependent for its birth upon our lacks. An action that is determinative in determining our existential condition is dependent upon will, and so is voluntary in nature. It is the voluntariness of an action that makes it either good or bad, which, with reference to causality, bears its fruit in accordance with its nature. The possibility of fruit-bearing action exists to the extent an individual being lives in the state of imperfection. The sense of imperfection exists because of ignorance. Ignorance is such a form of imperfect knowledge that terminates in the emergence of dissatisfaction. Accordingly says Abhinavagupta in this regard: "The impurity of action (*kārma-mala*) comes when the doer is in the state of ignorance and imperfection has the sense of duality, and performs actions in the form of virtue and vice (*dharma-adharma*), which leads to birth and reaping of the fruit of action" (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.2.5). In this manner is affirmed the conviction that it is the nature of action that determines our future birth. The existing conditions in which an individual finds himself owes its origin to actions that have been performed in our past

lives. The present condition of existence is the outcome of the deeds done in the past lives. The continuous process of the cycle of rebirths is called bondage. Insofar as an individual being goes on performing actions, to that measure he will be caught up in the net of the cycle of rebirth called bondage (ibid.: 3.2.5: *dharmādharmarūpān kārma malaṃ...*). Action, whatever its nature may be, is always equated with bondage. The state of bondage is seen to be representing that state of an animal (*paśu*) who is bound by the ropes (*pāsa*) of contingency. In contrast to this state of bondage, there exists the state of freedom, which is characterized by the experience of nectarine bliss that ensues from the experience of the Absolute as being non-dual, and in terms of which complete freedom from the cycle of rebirth is achieved.

To conclude: The appearance of impurity, in the form of *āṇava-mala,* is not like the *māyā* of Śaṁkara whose origin or source is unknown. In Trika Śaivism the substantive impurity, however, has a definite source, and the source is none other than Paramaśiva himself. With the manifestation of this impurity, there begins the process of obscuration of the essential nature of Śiva itself. This obscuration expresses itself, at the individual level, in the form of limited knowledge and action. It is the sense of incompleteness that is seen to be represented by the *āṇava-mala,* and accordingly are given rise to innumerable individuals who are, as it were, possessed with the fever of limitation. It is on account of *āṇava-mala* that the emergence of another impurity is facilitated, and the impurity is known as that of *kārma-mala.* The limitations that an empirical individual experiences gives rise to desire, and desire, in turn, expresses the sense of incompleteness. The empirical individual, in order to satisfy his desire, commits deeds that are fruit-bearing. Whatever kind of fruit a desire may give rise to, it has to be reaped in the form of future birth. The association of the self with deeds that are the outcome of *kārma-mala* are directly responsible in restricting its functionality, and so this process of restriction of psycho-physical construct is carried out by what is called *māyīya-mala.* And the essential feature of *māyīya-mala* is characterized by the emergence of the cognition of difference that eventuates between the subject and the object. This sense of

difference will continue to the measure impurities continue to function. It is upon the negation of these impurities that the individual existent is so empowered by the spiritual vision as to be in the lap of blissful perception of reality as being non-dual.

गायत्र्या गीयते यस्य धियां तेजः प्रचोदकम्।
चोदयेदपि कच्चिन्नः स धियः सत्पथे प्रभुः॥७८॥

78. **gāyatryā gīyate yasya**
dhiyāṃ tejaḥ pracodakaṃ/
codayedapi kaccinnaḥ
sa dhiyaḥ satpathe prabhuḥ//

Trs.: Would such Lord, who is invoked by Gāyatrī (and) whose (ever-so) blazing energy (continuously) prods the intellects, (accordingly) motivate our intellects towards (such a) path that is (full of) truth (or goodness).

Comment: The *gāyatrī mantra* is sung, with profound devotion and reverence, during the sacred thread ceremony. It is such an initiatory ceremony through which a young lad is put on the path of spiritual enlightenment by uttering this *mantra* into the ear of the initiate, and the *mantra* consists of the following words: *oṁ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ, tat savitur vareṇyaṃ, bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yonaḥ, pracodayāt.* By uttering the *mantra oṃ,* one thereby invokes all such spiritual energies that reverberate through the triad of worlds, namely, the physical world (*bhūr),* the intermediary world (*bhuvaḥ*), and the heavenly world (*svaḥ*). It is through the invocation of *oṁ* that the reciter is enabled to dissolve all the categories of existence (*tattva*-s) into supreme consciousness, represented by Paramaśiva. All these realms or worlds are shining on account of the light of the sun (*savitur*), representing thereby the luminous supreme consciousness. The Light (*bharga*) of this Sun is to be respected and adored (*vareṇyaṃ*), because it is this effulgent light that is responsible in enlightening not only us, but making all the worlds resplendent with the brilliance of its light. As this light is full of the golorious effulgence, so it needs to be

meditated upon. It is upon this never-diminishing Light of the Lord upon which I mediate, so that there may occur such spiritual elevation in terms of which the intellectual state of contraction is overcome. The term *gāyatrī*, thus, represents the singing of such a song that is sacred, and thereby empowers the reciter in such a manner as would transcend all the forms of contractions. It is by singing the song of *gāyatrī* that the effulgent Light (*tejaḥ*) is induced into our intelligence (*dhiyo yonaḥ pracodayāt*).

The term *gāyatrī* is considered a *mantra*, and as a *mantra* it consists of two parts, namely, *gāyata* and *tri*. A Yogī, while in deep absorptive meditation, sings (*gāyata*) it inwardly. In the process of meditation a yogī is protected (*tri*) by its singing. This singing begins from the "root-cakra" (*mūlādhāra*) and ends in what is called *brahmarandhra*. As the singing of this *mantra* leads to one's protection, so accordingly it has been greatly revered in both the Vedic and Tāntric traditions. A *gāyatri mantra* is also known as a *sūtra*, and its essential meaning is explained in terms of ritual worship called *saṅdhyā*, which is to be performed in the morning, in the noon, and in the evening. While embodying the five forms of *brahman*, these "forms" have been explained in terms of the "universal pervasion" (*bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ*), "emanation of the world" (*tat savitur*), "form of worship" (*vareṇyaṃ bhargo*), "divine playfulness" (*devasya dhīmahi*), and the "inspirer of intelligence" (*dhiyo yonaḥ pracodayāt*). It is these five forms that have been presented in this hymnal verse. It is in the performance of the ritual worship (*saṅdhyā*) in which the *mantra* of *gāyatrī* is applied. Each *mantra* is said to be containing within itself energies of two types, namely, the subjective energies (*vācya-śakti*) and the objective energies (*vācaka-śakti*): the former representing energies that are devoid of attributes (*nirguṇa*) and the latter representing energies that are full of attributes (*saguṇa*). In the context of worship of energies, it is natural that worship would be offered to such energies that are full of attributes. Insofar as the determinate form of *gāyatrī* is concerned, it expresses itself through three forms, and each form is made use of in a particular type of ritual worship. Insofar as the morning *saṅdhyā* is concerned, it is conceived in the shape of two-armed Brahmāṇī, and who is said to be riding a swan. The Goddess Brahmāṇī is said to be a

young lady, and is the presiding deity of *Ṛgvedā*. The determinate energy that represents the noon *saṅdhyā* is known as Sāvitri. As a four-armed Goddess, she is spoken as Vaiṣṇavī, and it is the vulture who is said to be her means of transport. As a lady who is grown up she is said to be the presiding deity of *Yājurveda*. The determinate energy that represents the evening *saṅdhyā* is known as Sarasvati. She is said to be having a triad of eyes, and so accordingly is called Rudrāṇī. Her physical form is said to be that of an old lady.

अष्टमूर्ते किमेकस्यामपि मूर्तौ न नः स्थितिम्।
शाश्वतीं कुरुशे यद्वा तुष्टः सर्वं करिष्यसि॥७९॥

79. aṣṭamūrte kimekasyām-
api mūrtau na naḥ sthitiṃ/
śāśvatīṃ kuruśe yadvā
tuṣṭaḥ sarvaṃ kariṣyasi//

Trs.: O, the Lord of Eight Forms, would thou be (so gracious as) to provide us with an eternal abode in any of thy forms? While being satisfied, would thou thereby confer (upon us) the All, (which is to say: disclose thy universal form).

Comment: The forms through which Lord Śiva expresses himself are earth (*pṛthvi*), water (*jala*), fire (*agni*), wind (*vāyu*), ether (*ākāśa*), sun (*sūrya*), moon (*soma*), and the one who performs sacrifice (*yajamāna*). The individuals that inhabit the various regions, which is to say from Earth to *śāntātīta-kalā*, are so numerous as to be countless, which would mean that they cannot be at all counted on account of the sheer weight of numbers. Instead of counting the number of individuals inhabiting these various regions, the devotee accordingly is requesting the Lord as to whether it would be possible for him to be existing in all these various formations. The essence of the argument is that there is nothing in all the regions that can exist separate from the Lord. Since it is the presence of the Lord that is to be the basis of every manifest thing, so the cosmic aspect of the Lord is disclosed in terms of the statement: *yathā piṇḍe, tathā brahmāṇḍe*, which is to say that

the microcosmos parallels the macrocosmos. The devotee, thus, is praying for a vision that is macrocosmic in nature.

वस्तुतत्त्वं पदार्थानां प्रायेणार्थक्रियाकारम्।
भवतस्त्वीश नामापि मोक्षपर्यन्तसिद्धिदम्॥८०॥

80. vastutattvaṃ padārthānāṃ
prāyenārthakriyākāraṃ/
bhavatastvīśa nāmāpi
mokṣaparyantasiddhidaṃ//

Trs.: The functionality of a substance, within the empirical framework, is determined by (what is called) the causal efficiency. (Opposite view to it) is that it is thy (mere) Name that is (so empowers as would) bestow (the causal) success to Liberation!

Comment: There is a philosophical view which says that the reality or unreality of an object is not determined by what we perceive or how we perceive. The truth-value of an object is determined, in the midst of change, by what we may call its causal efficiency. If causal efficiency is the criteria for determining the truth of an object, then the question arises as to whether this rule can be applied to that which essentially is unconditioned (*asaṁskṛta*). If an unconditioned entity is an unoriginate, then how will we be able to apply this norm of efficiency to it? An unconditioned entity is not endowed with efficiency because it is unable to cause anything to arise. Though space never impedes movement, it is not, however, the cause of movement. It is, thus, not space that should be seen as the efficient cause of motion. From this argument it may be assumed that an entity that is permanent cannot be imputed with causal efficiency. Since permanent entities are seen to be devoid of efficiency, it would mean that they are unproductive and non-functional (*artha-kriyā asāmarthya*) on account of their being incapable of causing anything to arise. Such entities are non-functional, not in the sense of a rabbit's horns, but in the sense of being non-actual (*abhāva*). A non-actual entity, because of its inexistence, cannot be imputed with the power of efficiency. Within

the context of such a vision it would mean that only phenomenal entities are endowed with causal efficiency on account of them being existent. According to this argument all unconditioned entities, being non-actual, are inexistent, and so devoid of the power of causal efficiency.

Since it is efficiency that determines the existence of an entity, it means that the unconditioned entities, on account of their inefficiency, cannot be ascribed with existence. It does not, however, mean that the unconditioned entities, like the sky flower, are inexistent. If such entities are considered to be inexistent, then they would accordingly be unknowable. These entities, according to Buddhists, are knowable, and can be known through the medium of uncontradicted knowledge. The unconditioned entities like space depend for their affirmation on concepts, and it is through concepts that their knowledge is acquired, and thereby is established their existence. They have, therefore, to be treated as noetic entities. The caused entities, on the other hand, do not depend either upon name or upon a concept. They are directly cognized by the senses. Since the uncaused entities are not directly available to the senses, so the only way of knowing them is through the means of concepts, which means that they exist conceptually only. In the case of caused entities, they exist by their own condition. They are known through right cognition. They are accordingly said to be self-subsistent (*svalakṣaṇa*), and so exist as reals.

This analysis of causal efficiency shows that what may exist phenomenally may not exist ultimately. Such entities can be affirmed conceptually by means of right cognition (*pramāṇa*). Having reduced the knowledge of the unconditioned entities to concepts, the Buddhists thereby aim at eliminating the universals. The universals are seen to be undesirable because the uncaused entities do not exist substantively, and so cannot be called substantive existents (*dravya siddha*). They are mere logical constructs (*pramāṇa siddha*). Thus an entity of a universal character can be said to be existing substantively only if every particular, being subsumed by a universal, is a caused entity. This would mean that the universal and the particular are identical, although they

may differ logically. Take, for example, the case of "blue." The "blue" as a general and a particular are not to be treated as two different entities. The colour blue exists as a universal, even though it may not be separate from the particular. This understanding of causal efficiency as being the validating norm concerning the truth-value of an object is problematic. If the statement concerning truth is to be measured in terms of its functionality, then there are numerous truths that can't be validated in terms of causal efficiency. If there are no universals, there would, then, be no possibility of knowing anything. Let the theory be buried under the debris of inessentials.

मुहुर्मुहुर्जगच्चित्र-स्यान्यान्यां स्थितिमूहितुम्।
शक्तिर्या ते तया नाथ को मनस्वी न विस्मितः॥ ८१॥

81. **muhurmuhurjagaccitra-**
syānyānyāṃ sthitimūhituṃ/
śaktiryā te tayā nātha ko
manasvī na vīsmitaḥ//

Trs.: O Lord, (explain to us as to) which thoughtful (person) would not be amazed with thy power that has (the power) to conceive the diverse states of the world every moment!

Comment: The composer of the verse is so amazed at experiencing such diversity in the world as would be baffling, on the one hand, and mesmerizing, on the other hand. The question arises as to what kind of power the Lord is in possession of that is responsible in giving rise to this wondrous diversity that is constitutive of objectivity. As the human intellect has limited capacity to know things as they are in themselves, so it would mean that we can never know as to what kind of power the Lord has that is the source of this diversity. The Trika scriptures, however, have disclosed as to what kind of powers the Lord is in possession of, and through which powers this objective diversity is emitted. The absolute display of divine powers, according to Trika thinking, is displayed through five processes or acts – and they are those of

emanation (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*), dissolution (*saṁhāra*), obscuration (*pidhāna*), and revalation/grace (*anugraha*). The Lord engages in the activity of emanation of objectivity the moment he so reflects concerning objectivity as if it is separate from him. Such an act of the Lord may be considered as being of the nature of basic emanation of objectivity. This basic emanation of objectivity appears in the form of "this" (*idaṃ*). What the Lord manifests, in the form of diverse objectivity, is preserved in terms of its continuation, and at the end of an Aeon there occurs the dissolution of the manifest diversity. It is through these glorious powers that the divine splendour of Paramaśiva is displayed. It is the lordship of the powers of the Lord that the acts of emanation, preservation and dissolution are carried out. The execution of these creative acts also denotes the sovereign freedom of the Lord. There is nothing that can possibly become an impediment in the execution of these creative acts. It is so because Paramaśiva is absolutely free. It is in the "freedom of will" of the Lord in which the amazing beauty of this objective diversity is to be found. Also reflected in this verse is the Trika view concerning the nature of the emanated universe. Taking the clue from the Buddhists, it maintains that the objects exists momentarily. The imputation of momentariness to objectivity would mean that there is a continuous process of emanation and dissolution, which corresponds to the opening and closing of eyelids of the Lord. When there is opening of eyes, there is correspondingly the emergence of the universe, and when there is the closing of the eyes, there occurs the dissolution of the manifest universe. It is the process of emanation and dissolution that constitutes what could be called the universal momentariness.

दुष्करं सुकरी कर्तुं दुःखं सुखयितुं तथा।
एकवीरा स्मृतिर्यस्य तं स्मरामः स्मरद्विषम्॥८२॥

82. duṣkaraṁ sukarīkartuṃ duḥkhaṃ
sukhayituṃ tathā/
ekavīrā smṛtiryasya taṃ
smarāmaḥ smaradviṣam//

Trs.: While remembering (Śiva), the enemy of Cupid, it takes single recollection/remembrance (of him) that changes what is (inherently) a difficult deed into a deed that is easeful, and likewise (is changed) what is sorrowful into what is conducive to good.

Comment: The verse points out the pleasing nature of Lord Śiva. Anger or indifference does not stay for long with him. Even his obstinacy melts in front of the love of a devotee. And this aspect of Lord Śiva is brought out succinctly when it is asserted that he so favours his devotee as to make his problems easy provided the devotee remembers him. By laying emphasis upon the remembrance of the holy Name of the Lord, we are thereby charting out an easy course of such spiritual method as would lead us to the experience of the Lord. The holy remembrance of the divine is the easiest way of imprinting upon the mind the presence of the Lord. Once pleased, Lord Śiva empowers the devotee in such a manner as would enable him to perform deeds that once seemed to be impossible. For a true devotee of the Lord, therefore, there is nothing that cannot be achieved. It is the divine grace that facilitates the passage of realizing the goal that initially may have seemed to be impossible, which is to say: beyond the human reach.

जयन्ति गीतयो यासां स गेयः परमेश्वरः।
यन्नाम्नापि महात्मानः कीर्यन्ते पुलकाङ्कुरैः॥८३॥

83. **jayanti gītayo yāsāṃ sa**
geyaḥ parameśvaraḥ/
yannāmnāpi mahātmānaḥ
kīryante pulakāṅkuraiḥ//

Trs.: It is of (supreme) worth to (offer) hymns of praise to the Highest Lord (precisely because such) laudatory hymns (symbolize) victory (or excellence), and, while hearing his (sweet) name, the enlightened ones are (so overjoyed as to result) in their blooming like the sprouts of goose-bumps.

Comment: When a devotee sings the laudatory song of the Lord, he thereby is so absorbed by the sweetness of words as to be in the state of ecstasy. The effect of the music of the song, the tonality of the voice and the softness of the words is so amazing as to cause goosebumps in the body of a holy saint. Singing the song of the Lord is one of the easeful methods that can give rise to the transcendent ecstatic experience. Once in the state of ecstatic love, there then ensues the continuous flow of divine nectar and in terms of which is gained access to the immortal state of Being. Let us, therefore, immerse in the singing of holy and sonorous hymns of the Lord, so that we gracefully may be placed in the divine presence of the Lord.

भवानिव भवानेव भवेद्यदि परं भव।
स्वशक्तिव्यूहसंव्यूढ-त्रैलोक्यारम्भसंहृतिः॥८४॥

84. **bhavāniva bhavāneva**
bhavedyadi paraṃ bhava/
svaśaktivyuhasaṃvyūḍha-
trailokyārambhasaṃhṛtiḥ//

Trs.: Thou, O Bhava, gave rise to the manifestation of the threefold world and its dissolution upon the unfolding of thy energy of freedom, and if there is anyone equal to thee, it is thou alone.

Comment: This verse points out the stark fact about the absoluteness of the Absolute by pointing out that there is none like it who has the power of giving rise to the emanation or the dissolution of the universe. It is Paramaśiva alone who, on account of his absoluteness, is so empowered as to cause the emission and dissolution of the emanated. The Absolute accomplishes this creative act when its Energy expresses itself through the five processes of emanation of objectivity, its preservation and dissolution. In addition to these three creative powers, the Absolute also conceals its essential nature (*pidhāna*) at the time of actualization of the manifest order of objectivity. As manifest category, Paramaśiva hides its essential nature by reducing itself to the status of a limited existent. Although concealing its essential nature, yet the Absolute,

at the same time, reveals itself to those who take refuge in him by sending grace (*anugraha*) upon them. Among these five innate powers of the Absolute, the three powers concern themselves with the manifestation and dissolution of objectivity. The last two powers concern themselves with the Absolute itself, which tells us as to how the Absolute conceals and reveals its essential nature.

The five processes (*pañcakṛtya*) correspond to the five functional powers of the Absolute, which are consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*). The first two aspects, namely, consciousness and bliss, have not to be analyzed in terms of powers. Instead being of powers of Paramaśiva, they constitute his essential nature. As consciousness, Paramaśiva not only is effulgent Light, but also expresses itself as self-awareness, and it is awareness that consciousness as Light translates itself into cognitive knowledge. Consciousness as Light is, thus, characterized by the awareness of pure "I" (*ahaṁ*). Insofar as other three aspects of the Absolute, namely, will, knowledge and action, are concerned, they are directly related to the manifestation of phenomena. The three powers of will, knowledge and action become operative the moment tendency for the phenomenal emission arises in the Absolute. It is the power of will that represents the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute, and in terms of which is willed the fructification of objectivity. It is the cosmic dance of Śiva, in the form of Naṭarāja, that expresses the divine delight of manifestation of the universe. The power of will begins to operate the moment there arises desire within Śiva for the manifestation of phenomena. The arising of desire for manifestation is seen the first sign of wonder (*camatkāra*) of phenomenal manifestation. The next step, upon the emergence of desire, is that of ideation. The arising of ideation corresponds to the power of knowledge, whereas its execution is carried out by the power of action. Thus the desire for, and the idea of, the world is actualized when Paramaśiva projects the phenomenal entities as appearance (*ābhāsa*), and it is the power of action that actualizes this aspect of manifestation.

मन्त्रोऽसि मन्त्रणीयोऽसि मन्त्री त्वत्तः कुतो ऽपरः।
स मह्यं देहि तं मन्त्रं त्वन्मन्त्रः स्यां यथा प्रभो॥८५॥

85. mantro'si mantraniyo'si
mantrī tvattaḥ kuto'paraḥ/
sa mahyaṃ dehi taṃ mantraṃ tvanmantraḥ
syāṃ yathā prabho//

Trs.: Thou, (O Śiva), art the sacred formula (*mantra*); it is thou (alone) who is the essence of the holy word (*mantraniya*) ; and it is thou who is the worshipper of the sacred formula (*mantri*). How can there be any *sādhaka* separate from thee? So, O Lord, bestow on me such a *mantra* as would enable me to become one with the *mantra* (of thine, which ultimately would mean thee).

Comment: A *mantra* is a combination of such letters as would contain divinity within itself. Upon invoking the *mantra* in silence inwardly, the *sādhaka* thereby attempts at attaining, through concentration (*ekāgrata*), the sense of unity with the divinity itself, which would mean of gaining "absorptive entrance" (*samāveśa*) into the vastness of divinity itself. A *mantra,* thus, is not a mere mumbo-jumbo of words, meaning nothing; it is, instead, palpitating with the throbbing pulsation of the Divine, and is seen to be the embodiment of the Absolute as consciousness in the form of the sound of letters. It is within such a doctrinal perspective that Paramaśiva is identified with the *mantra* when it is asserted that the Lord is the *mantra.* The Lord is not only identical with the *mantra,* but is the one who is worshipped as a *mantra.* Such a conviction concerning the potency of *mantra* tells us that it is Lord Śiva who, in the form of a *mantra,* is being worshipped when the *mantra* is recited. The one who is worshipping as well as reciting the *mantra,* in the form of a *sādhaka,* is none other than Śiva itself. It would mean that it is the Lord himself who is identical with the *mantra* as well as it is he himself who, in the form of *mantra,* is being worshipped by himself. It is thou, O Lord, who is a *mantra.* It is thou as a *mantranīya* who is being worshipped. It is thou who as a *sādhaka,* which is to say: as a *mantri,* who is engaged in the recitation of the *mantra.* It is thou thyself who represents all these aspects, and apart from thee, there is none else who can represent this threefold aspects of a *mantra: tvattaḥkuto'paraḥ*! A

prayerful request is made unto the Lord while keeping all these aspects in view, and the prayer is: Bestow upon me, O Lord, such a *mantra* by the invocation of which I am be able to realize oneness with thee (*tvanmantraḥ syāṃ yathā prabho*). It is accordingly asserted that the absorptive contemplation of the *mantra* results in empowering the *sādhaka* in such a manner as would lead to the gaining freedom from sin, which would mean of experiencing the joy of emancipation. Not only does an individual attain the transcendental goal of freedom from the cycle of rebirth, but also is enabled to accomplish the worldly goals, which are subsumed by what is called the "four goals of life" (*puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaya*). From a transcendental perspective, a *mantra* is seen to be representing consciousness in the form of certain sounds, letters and words. It is through the awakening power of a *mantra* that a *sādhaka* has the possibility of realizing the non-dual truth concerning reality as being consciousness. It is this transcendental consciousness that expresses itself in the form of the universe, and so, on the basis of this vision, is asserted that nothing is separate from consciousness, or, should we say that everything is identical with supreme consciousness.

भारूपःसत्यसंकल्पस्त्वमात्मा यस्य सोऽप्यहम्।
संसारीति किमीशैष स्वप्नः सोऽपि कुतस्त्वयि॥८६॥

86. **bhārūpaḥ satyasaṁkalpas-**
tvamātmā yasya so'pyahaṃ/
saṁsārīti kimīśaiṣa svapnaḥ
so'pi kutastvayi//

Trs.: (Though) I am that (person) whose self thou art, which is of the nature of luminous I-consciousness, (even then), O Lord, I am still subject to transmigration (which means that I am still a mortal being). (Has such a state occurred on account of the rupture from transcendent consciousness, and is such an experience) a mere dream? Does the possibility of such an experience exist in you (whose nature is light of I-consciousness)?

Comment: It is *a priori* asserted that the essential nature of the Absolute is characterized by such consciousness which is of the form of luminosity (*bhārūpaṃ*), and this luminous transcendental consciousness is the very core of my Self, which to say: the Self within me is none else than the glowing consciousness, which conceptually is referred to as Paramaśiva or Maheśvara. The question that is raised within the framework that conceives the Absolute as being the luminous light, and this luminous consciousness as being non-different from the Self, then why is it so that I am still roaming from one birth to another (*saṁsāri*)? I am not at all experiencing myself as being of the nature of luminous light, or being identical with you. I am experiencing myself as a mortal being, subject to birth, growth, sickness, old age and death. Does the possibility of my being non-different from you exist within you or not? Answer me with words that are definitive. Is this a dream that I am dreaming? I know not. The very sense of difference should not exist at all, but it exists. Maybe it is due the veiling sheaths of *māyā*, or maybe it is due to nescience! Who knows except thee!

This query in the verse explains the quandary concerning the One and the Many. If the One alone is, then how to explain the Many that is constitutive of phenomenal life. In order to counteract this question, it could be argued that the Many proceed from the One. But such a response is full of contradictions. The phenomenal diversity consists of dissimilars, and dissimilars never co-exist together. It means that there exists no possibility for the dis-similars to exist logically in the One. If so, then the One cannot be the cause of the Many, which is constitutive of the phenomenal diversity. Even if we grant that it is the One who is the causal source of the variegated entities of the world, then the question is: How are we going to relate the phenomenal diversity to the One?

The Trika assertion concerning reality as being non-dual does not mean that it rejects or negates the world of diversity. The Trika explains the conception of non-dual reality in such a manner as would lead to the inclusion of diversity into the unitary nature of Being. Such an explanation would mean that it is one and the

same reality that manifests itself in diverse forms in the world. Since it is one and the same reality that manifests itself as the Many, so the question of co-existence of dissimilars does not arise. The seeming difference that we experience in the world of diversity is due to the mental projection. The difference that is experienced in phenomenal diversity may be explained in terms of a dream experience. When, for example, consciousness projects the world of diversity in a dream, it does not mean that the two, viz., consciousness and its projected dream world, are different from each other, although one may experience it to be so. The dream world as well as consciousness, instead, are identical. The so-called dream objects are nothing but the projection of ideas that are in the mind.

It is this dream analogy that the Trika thinkers have used in explaining the relationship between the One, namely, Paramaśiva, and the Many, namely, the world of diversity. The intention of this analogy is to explain the phenomenal diversity as being the emission of Paramaśiva, which means that the former is substantially identical with the latter. The analogy is based upon the Sāṁkhya theory of causality, known as the theory of *satkāryavāda*, which maintains that the effect exists potentially in the cause. If this be the case, it would mean that the world of diversity, prior to its manifestation, exists potentially in identity with Paramaśiva, who is the cause. The so-called difference that is experienced between the world and Paramaśiva is, according to the Trika, apparent and not real. It is the experience of epistemic difference that is seen to be the cause of ignorance. It is upon the negation of ignorance that the substantial unity between the world and Paramaśiva is recognized (cf. *Tantrāloka*, 15.265-66).

The concept of the universe as being the projection/emission of Paramaśiva would mean that it is Paramaśiva himself who is both the material (*upādāna*) as well as the efficient cause (*nimitta*) of what is perceived as the world (cf. *Tantrāloka*, 10.7). If material causality is assigned to Paramaśiva, it would mean that Paramaśiva practically transforms itself into the world. This transformation would be like the transformation of milk into curd. Such a kind of transformation (*pariṇāma*) would destroy the very immutability of

Paramaśiva. Paramaśiva would no more be devoid of parts (*niṣkala*), full (*pūrṇa*) and indestructible (*akhaṇḍa*). While recognizing the logical defects in this kind of causality, the Trika thinkers have tried to overcome the shortcomings of this theory by offering an interpretation of causality in terms of the juice of peacock's egg (*mayūrāṇḍarasavat*). As to how Paramaśiva gave rise to the objective universe is linked to the juice of peacock's egg that contains within itself the colourful plumage of the peacock. Though the juice in the egg is colourless, yet it contains the variety of colours that are constitutive of peacock's plumage. The Trika thinkers, through the use of this analogy, want to point out that Paramaśiva is like the juice of an egg. While emitting the universe out of itself, Paramaśiva does not undergo any kind of transformation in the same manner as is the case with the juice of the peacock's egg. Moreover, Trika reasons out that the world, in the state of dissolution, exists potentially in identity with Paramaśiva, which establishes the fact that nothing has the possibility to exist as a separate entity from Paramaśiva. The cause for the emission of the universe is nothing except the free will (*svecchā*) of Paramaśiva.

तदभङ्गि तदग्राम्यं तदेकमुपपत्तिमत्।
त्वयि कर्मफलन्यासकृतामैश्वर्यमीश यत्॥८७॥

87. **tadabhaṅgi tadagrāmyaṃ**
tadekamupapattimat/
tvayi karmaphalanyāsa-
kṛtāmaiśvaryamīśa yat//

Trs.: The devotees who have, O Lord, offered their deeds as well as the fruits thereof to thee, are so glorified as would the (splendour of such glory) be imperishable (and so) commendable, and that alone is the truth.

Comment: The deeds of the devotees are of such nature as to be immortal and imperishable (*abhangi*). The deeds that are of imperishable nature have been given the nomenclature of being indestructible (*agrāmyam*). In contrast to the imperishable, noble

deeds, we have deeds that are perishable, and this class of deeds are given the nomenclature of *grāmya*. This classification of action is based upon the flow of actions in the mind. Two types of deeds, according to the *Yogasūtra*, flow in the sea called mind. The one flow of action is towards the good, whereas the other flow is towards the evil. It all boils down to the belief that there are two types of people in the world: people whose nature is such as to be flowing with the honey that is sweet and benevolent, and people who are bent on causing destruction by committing deeds that are, through and through, evil. The people of good nature, being selfless, surrender the noble fruits of their deeds unto the Lord. These two tendencies of good and evil, *dharma* and *adharma*, are to be found in each one of use. It depends upon each individual as to which tendency is given priority. A person of *sattva* will prefer to follow the glorious path of deeds that stem from goodness, whereas a person of the nature of *tamas* will perform deeds that are evil through and through.

क्षमः कां नापदं हन्तुं कां दातुं संपदं न वा।
योऽसौ स दयितोऽस्माकं देव देवो वृषध्वजः॥८८॥

88. **kṣamaḥ kāṃ nāpadaṃ hantuṃ**
kāṃ dātuṃ saṁpadaṁ na vā /
yo'sau sa dayito'smakaṁ
deva devo vṛṣadhvajaḥ//

Trs.: What kind of misfortune thou cannot obliterate, and what kind of riches thou cannot bestow, who is the Lord of Gods, and whose flag is the Bull (symbolizing thereby Dharma, which accordingly denotes the absolute unity of knowledge and action), and whom we (accordingly) love very dearly.

Comment: In the verse is pointed out the absoluteness of the Absolute, which expresses the idea of the Fullness of Being. As perfect and full in itself, the Absolute accordingly is depicted as lacking nothing, which would mean that it transcends the empirical duality of presence-absence, perfection-imperfection. As the

embodiment of freedom, the Absolute has all such powers at its disposal that would be capable of removing any kind of misfortune that may befall a devotee. While the Absolute has the power of removing every kind of torturous pain from the devotee, it also has the power of bestowing every kind of splendid fortune upon the devotee. The very removal of pain denotes simultaneously the bestowing of glorious good fortune upon the devotee. There is nothing impossible that cannot be made into a possibility by the glorious innate powers of Paramaśiva. Possessing infinite transcendental powers, the Absolute accordingly is said to be both omnipotent and omniscient, which means that nothing exists apart from it.

मायामयमलान्धस्य दिव्यस्य ज्ञानचक्षुषः।
निर्मलीकरणे नाथ त्वद्भक्तिः परमाञ्जनम्॥८९॥

89. **māyāmayamalāndhasya**
divyasya jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ/
nirmalīkaraṇe nātha
tvadbhaktiḥ paramāñjanaṃ//

Trs.: Thy devotion, O Lord, is such a highly (medicinal) antidote (as would lead) to the purification of heavenly vision of knowledge, which has been suffering from the disease of blindness (caused) by the veils of Māyā.

Comment: It is affirmed through this verse that the very nature of empirical mode of existence is characterized by ignorance. This ignorance has its source in such a garland of concepts that express themselves in the form of pairs of opposites. Whatever cognitive knowledge we have as empirical beings is characterized by the sense of difference. The moment we perceive an object, we immediately differentiate it from other objects through the process of exclusion. It is this sense of exclusion that is seen to be serving as the basis of what we call the knowledge of difference (*bheda-jñaña*). This *bheda-jñāna,* within the Trika formulation, is equated with ignorance. Ignorance, however, should not be identified with

the absence of knowledge. Ignorance is knowledge, but it is such knowledge that is erroneous concerning the nature of the Self. There are two reasons for the existence of ignorance. One of the reasons is the delusory power of the category of Māyā. Upon the manifestation of the category of Māyā, there simultaneously come into being the five veiling sheaths of Māyā, which are known as *kalā, kāla, vidyā, rāga,* and *niyati.* These five products of Māyā so veil the essential nature of the empirical individual as would lead to erroneous understanding concerning the Self. The other reason for the existence of ignorance is the *āṇava-mala* which serves as the base for the *māyīya-mala.* Due to *māyīya-mala* everything is experienced as being different from everything else. In this manner an individual is deprived of the non-dual knowledge concerning the Absolute. And due to this erroneous knowledge the individual existent suffers from the tormenting pain of the cycle of rebirths. It is in the context of this realization that the verse expresses the anguish of the devotee who admits that he is suffering from such an eye disease that has become the cause of blinding darkness, which seems to have been caused by the impurity called *māyā* (*māyāmayīmalāṇḍhasya*). Even though possessing an eyesight that is open to the vision of Śiva (*divyasya jñāna cakṣuṣaḥ),* the fact remains that he is suffering from the eye disease of blinding darkness. There is only one remedy against this disease, which is that of removal of impurity from the eye, which can be achieved only by engaging in the process of purification of the eye. And this purification of the eye is actualized when the ointment of knowledge (*añjana*) is applied to it. And what is the nature of this ointment? It consists of the devotional love of God. It would mean that this eye disease will come to an end only when the ointment of divine love is applied to it.

निर्भयं यद्यदानन्द-मयमेकं यदव्ययम्।
पदं देह्योहि मे देव तूर्णं तत्किं प्रतीक्षसे॥९०॥

90. **nirbhayaṃ yadyadānanda-**
mayamekaṃ yadavyayaṃ/

padaṃ dehyehi me deva tūrṇaṃ
tatkiṁ pratīkṣase//

Trs.: O Lord, (be so graceful as would compel thee) to come (close) unto me, and (accordingly) make no delay in bestowing (such) state upon me that is devoid of fear, (full) of bliss, and never ceases to be. Then why to wait for (so long)?

Comment: In this verse is expressed, without subscribing to any kind of philosophical jargon, the essential nature of the Divine. We are informed that the nature of the Lord is devoid of fear. Fear exists where there is no freedom, where there is the "other" who is seen in terms of threat. The Absolute is conceived to be fearless precisely because there is no "other" who could be seen as a threat to one's freedom, to one's very survival. As the Absolute is seen to be non-dual, so the question of the other does not arise. As singular and unique, the Absolute is filled with bliss eternal. The state of the Absolute is characterized by the eternal delight of bliss. It is this very bliss that is seen to be the cause of emanation of the universe. The devotee having come to know that the state of the Absolute is fearless, full of divine delight, and devoid of duality, so he accordingly is making a prayerful supplication unto the Lord for favouring him with these characteristics, which is to say: of making him fearless and free from the deluding impact of duality, which consequently results in the attainment of the experience that is blissful. It is this cherished goal of bliss which each and every devotee is desirous of achieving.

अहो निसर्गगम्भीरो घोरः संसारसागरः।
अहो तत्तरणोपायः परः कोऽपि महेश्वरः॥९१॥

91. **aho nisarga-gambhiro**
ghoraḥ saṁsārasāgaraḥ/
aho tattaraṇopāyaḥ
paraḥ ko'pi maheśvaraḥ//

Trs.: How this bottomless world of transmigration astonishingly seems to be filled (up to the brim with painful) miseries! Ah, why

should we worry (in the context of fearsome rebirth when) there is such an ultimate (support to be found) in the Highest Lord that will (enable us) to cross the (ocean of becoming).

Comment: In this verse is depicted the terrible truth concerning the nature of existence-in-the-world. The world which is inhabited by empirical existent is seen to be impermanent in terms of which is explained the momentary nature of everything that is conditioned and manifest. Since the world is seen to be in the state of flux, so every objective category is explained in terms of its impermanence. This continuous becoming of objectivity is equated with change. The objective world, on the one hand, is characterized by change, and change denotes impermanence of things and beings. This is one side of the picture. The other side of the picture visualizes such becoming of individuals beings as to be subject to continuous births and deaths. It is this two-pronged process of change which expresses itself, on the one hand, in terms of fluxional change as being nothing else than impermanence. That which is born is bound to undergo change in terms of birth, growth, sickness, old age and death. On the other hand, this continuous change expresses itself in the form of birth and death. From both these perspectives, which is to say: from the perspective of changing nature of objectivity and from the perspective of subjectivity, the limited individual has to go through the process of metempsychosis, depending on what deeds he has committed in previous lives. It is for this reason that the world is compared to a bottomless ocean of miseries. It is so because the world does not present itself such a place where freedom from sorrow, fear and death could be enjoyed. The world, however, may be a place of miseries, yet there also is the message of joy, which is: we can free ourselves from the bottomless ocean of becoming and change provided we take refuge in Lord Śiva. It is by placing our trust in the Lord alone that we shall be so empowered as would enable us to cross over this ocean of impermanence and transmigration. Rightly has Lord Śiva been said to be the refuge of all those who have become lost in the pathless world of becoming.

नमः कृतकृतान्तान्त तुभ्यं मदनमर्दिने।
मस्तकन्यस्तगंगाय यथायुक्तार्थकारिणे॥९२॥

92. namaḥ kṛta-kṛtāntānta
tubhyaṃ madanamardine/
mastaka-nyasta-gaṅgāya
yathāyuktārtha-kāriṇe//

Trs.: Prostration unto thee, the eliminator of Death, (and so also responsible) for reducing the Cupid to a (heap) of ashes, while (at the same time) thou hast placed Gaṅgā on thy forehead, (which means that thou art so) independent as to do whatever is just (and right).

Comment: The greatest fear that each one of us faces is the fear of death. Death represents momentary, or what we call impermanent, nature of objectivity. The objective world is said to have encapsulated into itself temporality on account of being subjected to the finitude of space-time. Space-time is seen the very symbol, factual representation, of all that is finite, which means that the finite things ultimately are sucked up by what we call finitude. The terror of time is represented by the fluxional aspect of objectivity, which expresses itself in terms of a process that is impermanent. This black hole, called death, is overcome when we plunge into the Transcendent, which is beyond the processes of time, and so is Infinite. This one aspect of the Lord is such as would bring about the cessation of the fear of death for those who take shelter in him. The other aspect of the Lord is that he has overpowered the flowery arrows of Cupid once-for-all by reducing him to a heap of ashes. The Lord burns the Cupid on account of it being the symbol of temptation. People are so misled by the Cupid as to have such a spiritual fall in terms of which the path of righteousness is not trudged. The Lord, thus, saves his devotees from the trap of moral decadence. The Lord also has beautified himself by allowing the holy Gaṅgā to have her abode in the matted hair of his head, thereby allowing the devotee to have access to the holy drink of immortality.

ऐश्वर्यज्ञानवैराग्य - धर्मेभ्यो ऽप्युपरिस्थितिम्।
नाथ प्रार्थयमानानां त्वदृते का परा गतिः॥९३॥

93. **aiśvarya-jñāna-vairāgya-**
dharmebhyo'pyupari sthitiṃ/
nātha prārthayamānānāṃ
tvadṛte kā parā gatiḥ//

Trs.: Is there a higher (spiritual) state, O Lord, other than thine for those who (constantly) pray for such a state that would transcend even (such four states of consciousness), glorious splendour (*aiśvarya*), the (supernal) knowledge (*jñāna*), detachment (*vairāgya*) and righteousness (*dharma*)?

Comment: In order to reach the higher scale of spirituality, a *sādhaka* is expected, while journeying the path of Paramaśiva, to cultivate the following spiritual values, namely, *dharma, vairāgya, jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. The cultivation of the virtue of *dharma* is the *sine qua non* for spiritual life in the sense of it forming the basis or substratum of the spiritual superstructure that may be erected as a kind of protective scaffolding. It is the concept of *dharma* that informs us as to what we should do and what we should avoid doing. The awareness of *dharma* is such as to inform us as to what is righteous and what is unrighteous. If the cultivation of *dharma* as righteousness is made as the basis of one's life, there, then, exists no possibility for spiritual fall. It is through the practice of righteousness that there arises the flame of dispassion in the individual *sādhaka*. It is with the light of dispassion that one begins to perceive, in terms of cognitive knowledge, as to what is real and what is unreal. In this manner the *sādhaka* no more is deluded by knowledge that is delusory, and thereby is sublated the rise of such knowledge which perceives real in the unreal, and the unreal in the real. Avoiding the pitfalls of erroneous knowledge, the *sādhaka* accordingly is glorified with the splendour of supreme knowledge in terms of which is transcended the empirical realm of duality. Necessary it is, therefore, to pray for such glorious boons that would lead directly to the state of deep absorption that leads directly to the entrance into the supreme.

त्वय्यनिच्छति कः शंभो शक्तः कुब्जयितुं तृणम्।
त्वदिच्छानुगृहीतस्तु वहेद्ब्राह्मीं धुरं न कः॥९४॥

94. tvayyanicchati kaḥ śaṁbho
śaktaḥ kubjayitum tṛṇaṃ/
tvadicchānugṛhītastu vahedbrāhmīṁ
dhuraṃ na kaḥ//

Trs.: None can, O Śambhu, even bend a (piece) of straw unless thou so desire/will. Who is there who cannot handle the state of *brahman* when graced by thy will?

Comment: In this verse is expressed, on the one hand, the absolute autonomy of the will of the Lord and, on the other, is explained the contingent aspect of phenomena. From this is asserted that whatever happens in the universe of becoming, it is all due to the will of the Lord. Not even a blade of grass can be made to bend unless willed by the divine will of the Lord. It would mean that nothing has the possibility to exist unless willed by Lord Śiva. If at the same it is the wish of the Lord that a pauper should become a rich man, it will happen. It all depends on the divine will of the Lord (*tvadicchānugrhītastu*) as to whether a straw of grass should bend itself or not, as to whether a poor man should become rich or not. If the will of the Lord consents to the happenings of these things, then it will happen; if he does not wish it to happen, it will never happen. Stretching this argument further, it is said that if the Lord wishes that you should be so empowered as to realize the state of *brahman,* then no one has the capacity or power of not allowing it to happen. In the midst of all the opposition, it will happen, viz., the realization of the state of *brahman.*

It is in this context of the absolute freedom of Paramaśiva that we have to approach the question of the emission of the universe. Being absolutely free to do what he wants to do, the Great Lord, Maheśvara, accordingly manifests the universe as being its self-extension. The Absolute is spoken of as Maheśvara on account of him having sovereignly free will, which means that the Great Lord has such nature (*svabhāva*) as to have sovereign will (*svatantratā, svātantrya*), which is identical with absolute freedom. The ideation with regard to the emission of the universe that is in the mind of the Great Lord gets itself objectified on account of the sovereign

will. This Trika understanding of the Absolute would mean that the Great Lord is totally free to emit or not to emit the universe out of himself, which means that there is neither the inner nor the external necessity that necessitates the emission of the universe. If this is the case, then it would mean that the divine freedom of the Lord is beyond the reach of space-time causality. Free will of the Lord would denote such an absolute power of the Great Lord whereby he accomplishes all his tasks in accordance with his free will, which is unrestrained, unconfined and unimpeded in its flow. This is how Abhinavagupta has explained, in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*, as to what is constitutive of divine freedom of the Lord: "Therefore the Lord, Paramaśiva, whose own-being is Consciousness of the nature of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, who is the undefinable, ever-present Reality appears as subject from Rudra down to the immovable entities as objects like blue, pleasure, etc., which appear as if separate, though in essence they are not separate, through the glorious might of *svātantrya*, which is inseparable ... from *saṁvit* and which does not conceal in any way the real nature of the Supreme. This is the exposition of *svātantryavāda* (quoted in Jaideva Singh, *pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p.17).

हरप्रणतिमाणिक्य – मुकुटोत्कटमस्तकाः।
नमेयुः कं परं वा नमयेयुर्न धीधनाः॥९५॥

95. **hara-praṇati-māṇikya-**
mukutotkaṭa-mastakāḥ/
nameyuḥ kaṁ paraṁ
vā namayeyurna dhīdhanāḥ//

Trs.: Before which superior (authority) than themselves should they prostrate who may be (considered) to be rich in supernal wisdom, and whose forehead is uplifted on account of the crown studded with the gems of prostrations unto Hara? And before whom, thus, in the absence of an excellent person than themselves, should they bend?

Comment: The question that is raised in this verse is this: Is it necessary for a devote to prostrate before anyone else than the Lord? The answer would evidently be: there is no need for a devotee to bend or prostrate before anyone else apart from Lord Śiva because their foreheads are dazzling with the brilliance of gems, which is equated to the prostrations that have been made unto those that are intellectually gifted with divine wisdom. Instead of prostrating before the Lord, the Lord should, rather, prostrate before the prostrations that have been made unto the devotees that are gifted with excellent wisdom.

सर्वविभ्रमनिर्मोक - निष्कम्पममृतह्रदम्।
भवत्ज्ञानाम्बुधेर्मध्यमध्यासीयापि धूर्जटे॥९६॥

96. **sarva-vibhrama-nirmoka-**
niṣkampamamṛta-hṛdaṃ/
bhavat-jñāna-ambudher-
madhyaṃ-adhyāsīyāpi dhūrjaṭe//

Trs.: O Dhūrjaṭi! Should I (make an effort) to approach (such) an ocean of bliss, which is (considered as) the center of knowledge (viz., of consciousness), and which is (said to be) devoid of stir (on account) of the absence of ignorance?

Comment: The verse points out that the devotee of the Lord wants to plunge deeply into such an ocean of bliss from where he could easily extract such supernal gnosis that would become the basis of freedom from the restrictive restraints of bondage. The gods churned the ocean in order to secure the immortal drink of nectar. The seeker, however, is not so much interested in nectar as much as in the nectarine knowledge that bestows the final freedom from the bondage of painful becoming. Insofar as one remains under the influence of ignorance, to that extent there is no possibility of becoming free from the pain that is inflicted by the cycle of rebirth. It is the inherited ignorance (*pauruṣa-ajñāna*) and the intellectual ignorance (*bauddha-ajñāna*) that are seen to be the source of human bondage. In other words, it would mean that bondage is

characterized by ignorance that is either inherited or acquired. Insofar as the dyadic form of ignorance remains operational, to that measure the individual will experience the bondage of limitation. It is upon the removal of both the forms of ignorance that the individual existent has the possibility of experiencing the dawn of freedom in terms of transcending the structure of bondage. The removal of intellectual ignorance is possible either by following the spiritual instructions of a *guru* or by practicing the spiritual methods or by studying the sacred texts. The individual practitioner who adheres to such a spiritual discipline is so empowered as would result in the proper understanding as to who he actually is. However, intellectual knowledge does not yield such spiritual results as would lead to direct liberation from bondage till the time inherited ignorance is not completely destroyed (cf. *Tantrāloka-viveka,* 1.44). The destruction of the inherited ignorance, however, can be achieved only when there occurs the emergence of the dawn of intellectual knowledge.

If the removal of inherited ignorance is dependent upon the emergence of intellectual knowledge, then the question arises as to how this knowledge may emerge? The emergence of this knowledge is dependent upon the removal of the triad of impurities. The only way of washing off the stains of impurity has to be commensurate with the transmission of grace from a spiritual master. It would mean that the very stains of impurity are washed off the moment the divine grace descends upon the seeker. The grip of limited impurity (*āṇava-mala*) begins to be loosened the moment the seeker is initiated by the master into the spiritual path of Śaiva-yoga. And through the continuous practice of spiritual methods the impurity, step by step, is washed off. The cessation of ignorance, and thereby of impurity, is a *sine qua non* for spiritual development. It is upon the removal of ignorance, and thereby of impurity, that the spiritual life of the seeker blooms in its fullness. The blooming of spirituality results in the emergence of the non-dual vision of the Absolute, and in terms of which is experienced not only the pervasion of the self (*ātma-vyāpti*), but equally the pervasion of Śiva (*śiva-vyāpti*) (see *Paramārthasāra,* v. 60). With the destruction of both forms of ignorance comes into being the

knowledge that is fully intellectual (*bauddha*) as well innate (*pauruṣa*). Thus both forms of knowledge, intellectual and innate, are transformed into *vijñāna* the moment the state of the unity of Being within and without is experienced (Abhinavagupta, *Gitārthasaṁgraha: jñānaṃ brahma vijñānaṃ ca bhagavanmayī-mkriyāṃ*). It is in the context of this understanding that a devotee expresses his desire, which is: he wants to plunge into the ocean of gnosis so that he may extract redemptory knowledge from it.

चित्रं यच्चित्रदृष्टोऽपि मनोरथगतोऽपि वा।
परमार्थफलं नाथ परिपूर्णं प्रयच्छसि॥९७॥

97. **citraṁ yaccitra-dṛṣṭo'pi**
manorathagato'pi vā/
paramārtha-phalaṃ nātha
paripūrṇaṃ prayacchasi//

Trs.: It is, indeed, wonderful, O Lord, (to find out) that thou art (so gracious) as to bestow the entirety of (celestial) fruit supremely on (those devotees) who may have cognized (thee) in a picture or may have (simply) thought about thee.

Comment: In this verse is depicted such a wonderful and pleasing nature of Lord Śiva as would graphically express it as being benevolently gracious. The Lord is wonderfully so gracious as to bestow grace upon those seekers who merely think of him in their thoughts or look at his portrait. Even though the Lord may be beyond the borders of thinking or seeing, yet it is a wonder of wonders that there occurs the shower of heavenly fruit upon the seeker the moment he thinks of him in his imagination or thought. It explains the benevolent nature of the Lord. The Lord is always ready to be so benign as to send his divine grace upon his devotee.

It is in the context of the benign nature of the Lord that we should take into consideration the Trika concept of grace (*anugraha, śaktipāta*). Trika considers grace as a free gift of Paramaśiva to a man who is bound by the restraints of bondage. Grace is a free and unconditioned divine gift precisely because it

is not dependent upon one's merits that one may have earned. It is, therefore, termed as being causeless and motiveless (*ahetukī*). If it is a free divine gift, then the question arises: Why is it that only few are showered with the gift of grace, whereas others are not? Does not this amount to divine arbitrariness? The Trika system rejects outright such an accusation against Paramaśiva. The reasoning that is offered in this matter is this: Paramaśiva sends grace to all those seekers who deserve it, who seek it, and who are open to it. As a free gift, Paramaśiva showers those with his grace who surrender unto, and seek refuge in, him (cf. *Tantrāloka*, 13.117-118). The measure of grace one receives is dependent to what measure impurities have either been thinned or removed. Most of us, however, are in a state in which the impurities have not reached the point of ripening (*malapāka*).

Since no cause is ascribed to grace, so it is accordingly said to be God's playful nature that alone can be thought to be its cause. Whatever God does, he does it out of his own free will. And so grace is said to be a free gift of God's divine will. The gracious activity of God has been accepted both in terms of worldly enjoyment (*bhukti*) and soteriological freedom (*mukti*) (cf. ibid., 13. 278). It is grace that is considered to be the initial point of spiritual stir within an individual. The moment divine grace (*śaktipāta*) falls upon the individual, that very moment he surrenders unto Lord Śiva. Thus divine grace and the worship of the Divine go together, one intensifying the other, and thereby enhancing each other. It is the fall of grace that is seen to be responsible in directing an individual to a preceptor (*guru*). Sometimes a preceptor itself is considered to be the epitome of divinity. Upon receiving initiation (*dīkṣā*) from the preceptor, the adept thereby enters the path of spirituality. It is through initiation that the seeker receives grace, and as a result of which he has a direct intuitive experience of the Absolute – and such supersensuous experience is called *pratibhā* (see ibid., 13.142; *Yogasūtra*, 3.33). It is in this super-sensuous experience in which the *sumum bonnum* of life is hidden.

को गुणैरधिकस्त्वत्तः त्वत्तः को निर्गुणोऽधिकः।
इति नाथ नुमः किं त्वां किं निन्दामो न मन्महे॥९८॥

98. ko guṇairadhikas-tvattaḥ tvattvaḥ
ko nirguṇo'dhikaḥ/
iti nātha namaḥ kiṁ tvāṁ kiṁ
nindāmo na manmahe//

Trs.: Who is (there) to exceed thee in virtuous qualities? Who exceeds thee, (except thou thyself), in being devoid of attributes? Thus, O Lord, we do not know, through (such-like) assertions, as to whether we should praise or defame thee.

Comment: I am in a bewildering situation, and on account of the prevailing confusion, it is very difficult for me to find out in which way or form should I make an attempt of approaching you. Generally speaking, it is asserted that you are so transcendent as to be beyond the reach of understanding. An entity that is transcendent must necessarily be devoid of attributes. If you are devoid of attributes, then there exists no possibility for me to know you. The only way left of knowing anything or anyone is through what we call attributes. We say, for example, that this piece of wood is either hard on one side and soft on the other side. It is, thus, through the attribute of hardness or softness that I know the worth of wood. In your case, however, this principle is inapplicable. Although you may have been spoken of as being beyond the attributes, yet immediately we are informed that you possess such a number of attributes which cannot be enumerated. If you are full of such attributes as, for example, compassion, benevolence, goodness, etc., then you seem to be within the range of my understanding. If you are full of compassion, I can plead my case before you, and there will be no dearth of your compassion for me. The question before me is: How should I approach you? Should I praise (*stumaḥ*) or should I defame (*nindāmo*) you as an indeterminate or determinate entity? I really do not know (*manmahe*) as to what I should do. I leave it to you for your final judgement.

कीर्तनेऽप्यमृतौघस्य यत्प्रसत्तेः फलं तव।
तत्पातुमपि कोऽन्योऽलं किमु दातुं जगत्पते॥९९॥

99. kīrtane'pyamṛtaughasya
yatprasatteḥ phalaṃ tava/
tatpātumapi ko'nyo'laṃ
kiṁnu dātuṃ jagatpate//

Trs.: There is (none except) thee, O Lord of the universe, to make one to taste the celestial drink or to be graced by the fruit of thy grace, (and both of these states) are realized simply by uttering thy Name, (and which consists of) a mass of bliss.

Comment: The essence of this verse lies in the assertion that the delight that accrues to the devotee when he faces the Lord face to face in the mirror of consciousness is such as to be beyond the limits of narrative description. The massiveness of divine bliss is of enormous magnitude. If it is so, then it is impossible to make the other understand as to what the depth of the divine bliss is, which consists of in drinking the nectar that comes out from the fruit that has been made, on account of grace, available to us. It is impossible to explain the range of the taste of the nectar that has oozed out from the fruit of grace in terms of sentiment or feeling. It is beyond any kind of description, and so may appropriately be said to be inexpressible. The only way to know as to what kind of sweet taste flows forth from the experience of divine epiphany is to experience oneself the nectarine divinity. One can only convey the idea of the experience, but not the experience in itself. It has to be experienced by oneself. It is upon experiencing the divine taste of the nectar that one comes to know as to what the experience is all about.

निःशेषप्रार्थनीयार्थ – सार्थसिद्धिनिधानतः।
त्वत्तस्त्वद्भक्तिमेवाप्तुं प्रार्थये नाथ सर्वथा॥१००॥

100. nihśeṣa-prārthanīyārtha-
sārtha-siddhi-nidhānataḥ/
tvattas-tvadbhaktimevāptuṁ
prārthaye nātha sarvathā//

Trs.: Thou art the (ultimate) treasure-house of aspirations of (thy devotees), O Master! In order to obtain thy (perfect) devotion, I am (accordingly making an effort) of offering, in every way, my prayers unto thee.

Comment: Whatever spiritually is to be achieved, its ultimate destination lies in you alone, which is to say that you are the ultimate abode or treasury of all the achievements (*nihśeṣprārthanīyārtha*) that are achievable. Since you are the source and abode of what can be achieved in terms of success, so our prayer to you is that you may so favour us as to enable us with the achievement of thy devotion. It is your devotion (*tvadbhaktimevāptum*) alone that we would like to achieve, and it is the only goal that is worthy of achievement. I seek nothing else from the divine treasure except the realization of devotional love for you. Grant the wish that is contained in this prayer of ours, which is: realization of the state of devotional love of the Divine. A clear-cut demarcating line has to be drawn between the phenomenal and the transcendental. Although the phenomena may have emanated from the Absolute itself, yet it does not embody the permanence and durability of the transcendent. The phenomenal is characterized by birth, change, death, which means that there is nothing in the world to be worth achieving on account of its perishability and ephemerality. Realizing the nature of worldly things, the devotee of the Lord accordingly does not seek to achieve goals or things that are ephemeral, and thereby ending in experiences that are painful. Keeping this perspective in view, the devotee seeks to reach such a divine goal that is permanent and free from the temporal rise and fall, which is to say: From birth and death. It is the nectarine love of the Lord that is what the devotee is seeking, because in it are to be found all the aspirations that are spiritually so elevating as to be eternal.

नमस्त्रैलोक्यनाथाय तुभ्यं भव भवज्जुषाम्।
त्रिलोकीनाथतादान निर्विनायक शक्तये॥१०१॥

101. namas-trailokya-nāthāya
tubhyaṃ bhava bhavajjuṣāṃ/

trilokīnātha-tādāna-
nirvināyaka-śaktaye//

Trs.: Salutations unto thee, O Bhava, the (absolute) Lord of the three worlds, and thou art (in possession of such) absolute powers, (which are free from impediments), and (accordingly) thou bestows the lordliness over the universe to thy devotees.

Comment: We bow to Paramaśiva precisely because he is the origin and abode of everything that exists or is found in the triple worlds. As the source of these worlds, he is accordingly given the epithet of the "master of three world" (*trilokīnātha*). It is as the Master of these worlds that the devotee makes obeisance unto the Lord. As the Master of everything, Paramaśiva is said to be the embodiment of freedom (*svātantrya*), and this freedom expresses itself in terms of self-will (*svecchā*). It is through the self-awareness that the absolute freedom of the Absolute is concretized. Were the Absolute to be devoid of self-awareness, and of freedom as self-will, then it would no more be an ultimate reality, but would be like any inert object, devoid of consciousness. Accordingly writes Abhinavagupta: "If the Supreme Reality were (devoid of the power) of manifesting itself multitudinously, but remained (as it were) encased within its uniform solidity, it would (no more) be supreme power or consciousness, but would be something like a jar" (*Tantrāloka*, 3.119). While viewing the Absolute as being both consciousness and will, Trika thereby enunciates a doctrine that maintains the character of the Absolute as being both the knowing subject (*jñātā*) and the doer (*kartā*). The knowing and doing of the Lord is so autonomous as to be identical with freedom itself. It is through the absolute power of freedom that Paramaśiva engages in the creative activity of emission, preservation and dissolution of the universe. And this freedom of the Lord is unrestrained, unrestricted and unimpeded. It is through the unimpeded flow of freedom that the Lord bestows freely all the redemptory boons upon his devotees.

निःशेषक्लेशहानस्य हेतुः क इति संशये।
स्वामिन्सोऽसीति निश्चित्य कस्त्वां न शरणं गतः॥१०२॥

102. niḥśeṣa-kleśa-hānasya
hetuḥ ka iti saṁśaye/
svāminso'sīti niścitya kastvāṃ
na śaraṇaṃ gataḥ//

Trs.: Being in the state of doubt as to who is the cause for the removal of the entire (garland) of afflictions, O Lord, (I found out) that thou (alone) were the cause, and after being assured of this (truth), who would not seek refuge in thee?

Comment: One of the greatest enemies that makes the mind infirm is nothing else but doubt. Doubt is like an ocean, and, in the form of strong waves, tosses the man of doubt against huge cliffs as well as boulders. As a result of this tossing, man of doubt receives many such wounds that seem to be incurable. It is so because doubt is responsible in giving rise to such uncertainties that incapacitate an individual in such a manner as to make him incapable of making a definitive decision. Doubt, in the form of uncertainty, can express itself in many ways. The doubt could be with regard to the existence and non-existence of a thing. If lengthened, doubt could express itself as to whether a thing exists, or does it not exist, or does it both exist and not exist, and does it neither. If it is assumed, for example, that a thing exists, then the very proposition–it does not exist–should not be there. But our thinking structure is so arranged as to have both of them – exist and does not exist – simultaneously present. It is in such a bewildering situation in which a man of doubt moves like pendulum between two poles of uncertainty: knowing not which one to hold. Most of our life is spent waveringly between the two poles of uncertainty. The way of crossing the ocean of doubt is to seek refuge in the Lord, and through the boat of refuge one can cross safely the ocean, and thereby reach the other side of the shore.

भुक्त्वा भोगान्भवभ्रान्तिं हित्वा लप्स्ये परं पदम्।
इत्याशंसेह शोभेत शंभौ भक्तिमतः परम्॥१०३॥

103. bhuktvā bhogān-bhava-
bhrāntiṃ hitvā lapsye paraṃ padaṃ/

ityāśaṁseha śobheta śambhau
bhaktimataḥ paraṃ//

Trs.: Upon enjoying the (worldly) pleasures, and upon the removal of ignorance, I would desire the attainment of the supreme (spiritual) state – the cultivation of such a kind of hope comes to fruition only to the devotees of Śiva.

Comment: In the verse is pointed out a kind of spiritual plan that would serve two purposes simultaneously: On the one hand, the adept wants to enjoy the pleasures of the world, and, on the other hand, seeks also the divine delight of I-consciousness upon the completion of worldly course. The intention of the devotee, thus, is not to miss the experience of either kind of pleasure. Upon having completed the course of sensual pleasures (*bhuktvābhogān*), there is lurking a hidden desire in the recesses of the heart, which is the desire for the removal of every kind of error (*bhava bhrāntimhitva*). Once the delusional knowledge has been removed, and thereby has been removed the possibility for error, the seeker accordingly seeks to enjoy, in its purest form, the joys of the world. Pure joy or delight from the world can be derived only when one, upon the removal of the cataract of ignorance, gains the seat under the footstool of the Lord, which is the spiritual expression for the highest spiritual seat or state (*lapsye paraṃ padaṃ*). It is the true devotee of the Lord alone who is endowed with such a noble desire of gaining access to the seat that lies under the Divine footstool. The spiritual aim of a true Śaiva seeker is to enjoy both heaven and earth in terms of which every kind of negation is transcended. However, this enjoyment is sought only upon the removal of cognitive or spiritual deficiency. The joy that the seeker wants to enjoy has to be pure and subtle. It is not instinctual. It becomes spiritualized through and through the moment access of sitting under footstool of the Lord is realized. In this manner is affirmed the *apophatic* way of spirituality of Trika Śaivism.

नाथ स्वप्नेऽपि यत्कुर्यां ब्रूयां वा साध्वसाधु वा।
त्वदधीनत्वदर्पेण सर्वत्रात्रास्मि निर्वृतः॥१०४॥

104. nātha svapne'pi yatkuryāṁ
brūyāṁ vā sādhvasādhu vā/
tvad-adhīna-tvadarpeṇa
sarvatrātrāsmi nirvṛtaḥ//

Trs.: Whatever noble actions we may perform or whatever evil words we may utter, when in the state of dream, O Lord, in all such activities it is my (unrestricted) enthusiasm of my being to be one with thee, which (makes me experience) thy bliss in all such activities.

Comment: The prayer of the devotee is this: he wants to dedicate every kind of activity, nay everything, unto the Lord. Whatever good or evil (*sādhvasādhu*) he may do or utter (*yatkuryām bruyāṃ*) in the state of wakefulness or in the state of dream (*svapne'pi*), he wants it to be so divinized as to merge it completely in the divine consciousness of the Absolute. The distinction that occurs or is experienced between the sacred and the profane at the saptio-temporal level is completely transcended when entrance into the non-temporal realm of the Divine is made. Every kind of dualism, whether conceptual or perceptual, is transcended simply through the process of dissolving, when in deep yogic trance, the pairs of opposites into the cosmic consciousness. This desire of deification of every activity, of every word uttered, comes to fruition when the flood of grace falls upon the seeker, and he, with Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (vv. 14-15) cries out: "O joyous Existence! Who is not desirous (in this world) of realizing your (true) reality, which, (beyond any doubt), is (fully) competent in removing the fear of repeated rebirths (from our hearts)? We must, O Lord of the universe, obtain throughout our lives the permanent (stability) of your presence, through your grace, by fixing our minds on you (alone)."

ज्योतिषामपि यज्ज्योतिस्तत्र त्वद्धाम्नि धावतः।
चित्तस्येश तमः स्पर्शो मन्ये वन्ध्यात्मजानुजः॥१०५॥

105. jyotiṣāmapi yajjyotistatra
tvaddhāmni dhāvataḥ/

cittasyeśa tamaḥsparśo manye
vandhyātmajānujaḥ//

Trs.: I regard the connection of darkness of ignorance with consciousness, which (seemingly) seems to be moving in thy state, which, (however), is the Light of all lights, (and so such an association) is totally as impossible as would be that of a younger brother to a barren woman's son.

Comment: First and foremost, the Absolute in this verse is explained as being the "Light of lights," which is to say that whatever is manifest in the world is because of the Light of Paramaśiva. In this manner the foundation for the phenomenology of light is explained. The Absolute as consciousness is not only light (*prakāśa*), but also the cognitive reflection (*vimarśa*). It is through the power of cognitive reflection that the Absolute manifests itself as phenomena in different shapes and colours. It is in and through the cognitive awareness that the Absolute appears in the form of manifest phenomena. The universe as well as the phenomenal diversity is, thus, seen to be the self-manifestation of the Absolute. They who, through the practice of Śaiva yoga, perceive and experience that everything in the universe is nothing but the self-extension of Lord Śiva himself affirm the divinity of the universe itself (cf. *Śivadṛṣṭi,* 5.105–9). They see the presence of Śiva not only in the manifest categories, but beyond them also. Śiva not only manifests itself as the objective universe, but also in and through the three states of consciousness of waking, deep sleep and dreaming. It is in and through the revelatory aspect of the Absolute in which has been located the cause of the universe. It is maintained that the light of consciousness continuously shines forth as well as maintains the playful drama of the universe (cf. *Tantrāloka,* 1.92). The entire universe is nothing but the manifestation of the light of consciousness by virtue of its nature being playful. To be playful is the basic nature of Śiva. The Light of consciousness, in the process of its manifestation, does not suffer from any modification because the Absolute manifests itself in the same manner as is moon reflected in the pool of clean water (ibid.,1.34). The indivisibility of the Absolute shines forth eternally due to it being of the nature of

light. The luminosity of the Absolute represents its static aspect. The essence of light is reflection, viz., stir of consciousness, so that the Absolute as Godhead may shine through its five cosmic powers of emission, preservation, dissolution, concealment and grace. This cognitive awareness is equated, at the level of conceptuality, with divine *śakti*, which, from a religious perspective, is symbolized by the Mother Goddess. The Goddess, as the principle of femininity, represents the creative aspect of the Absolute. It is Śakti that imparts necessary dynamism to the otherwise passive Śiva. These aspects of the Absolute, passivity and dynamism, have not to be seen as possessions. For the Trika both these aspects represent the essential nature of the Absolute. Luminosity is the infinite light of the absolute consciousness, whereas dynamism represents the creative activity of consciousness as light. Since the Absolute is of the nature of light, so in the mind of the devotee arises the doubt as to whether there would be any possibility for darkness to arise. The doubt is a misplaced one precisely because it is accepted, *ab initio,* that light of consciousness is an unoriginate, which means that it is devoid of birth and death. It would mean that the light of consciousness, being eternal and infinite, has no possibility of disappearing. If this be the case, then to entertain the doubt for the possibility of darkness being there is not only wrong, but misplaced.

मन्ये न्यस्तपदः सोऽपि क्षेम्ये मोक्षस्य वर्त्मनि।
मनोरथः स्थितो यस्य सेविष्ये शिमित्ययम्॥१०६॥

106. manye nyasta-padaḥ so
'pi kṣemye mokṣasya vartmani/
manorathaḥ sthito yasya
seviṣye śivamityayaṃ//

Trs.: I (Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa) whose conviction has (gained) firmness of a resolve that I will serve (none else) but Śiva (alone), has set his feet, for the welfare of (all), on the path of liberation.

Comment: Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa as a devotee has gained the conviction in the reality of Paramaśiva, and so his conviction in this regard

has gained stability in terms of its firmness. Accordingly a true devotee of Paramaśiva has the conviction that he is being protected while travelling the path of liberation, which is to say: such path that leads to the freedom from repeated rebirths. The devotee has been cherishing this longing in his mind to seek freedom from the ever-recurring cycle of rebirths. In order to reach the goal of redemptory liberation, the seeker is asked to traverse any of the spiritual path that has been enunciated by the scriptures. The "paths of liberation" (*mokṣa-upāya*) are said to be *āṇava-upāya, śākta-upāya, śāmbhava-upāya,* and *an-upāya* corresponding to *kriyopāya, jñānopāya, icchopāya* and *an-upāya.* The cultivation of a method is dependent to what extent an individual has progressed spiritually. The first three methods, if practiced successfully, can lead to the eradication of the three impurities, which are the *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala.* Insofar as the Individual Method, also known as the *āṇava-upāya,* is concerned, it is very restricted in the range of its operation. The method is dependent upon the external supports for the stabilization of the mind. The support of external aides is taken in such a manner as would lead to the thinking of them as being the appearance of the Lord. In this manner this method is ultimately made to terminate into the Method of Energy (*śākta-upāya*). However, there is a fundamental difference between the two methods, in that the purity of conceptual knowledge is given priority in the Method of Energy, whereas in the Individual Method priority is given to such external objects that could be used as a means for the stability of the mind. In the Method of Energy the omnipresence of the Self is so reflected as would allow the adept to have the vision of the entire universe as existing within one's own consciousness. In the Individual Method, however, the knowable objects are so meditated upon as to envisage their separate identity. It is because of this reason that this method is seen to be constituted by action as well as by the sense of difference. The adept who practices this spiritual method has to be persistent in his endeavour. There is all the danger of lapsing on the way or remain suspended in the mid-course. If such a situation occurs, a yogi will have to be born again so that he may realize the state of Śiva (*Paramārthasāra,* vv. 98–102). As the goal of realizing identity with Paramaśiva is difficult for them who follow

this method, so the most they can achieve is the purification of dual forms of thought.

The highest spiritual method is known as the Null Method (*anupāya*), in that in it no physical or mental effort is involved. It is such a non-method that works on the principle of divine grace (*śaktipāta*). The descent of grace is very intense, and so the adept of this method realizes his goal immediately. There, thus, are such highly evolved souls who attain the perfect contemplative absorption in terms of identity with Paramaśiva. Such adepts are not dependent on physical effort or mental exertion. Such individuals need merely an indication concerning the nature of reality from their spiritual preceptor. So it would be sufficient for them to be informed that you are essentially of the nature of pure consciousness, which is the nature of the Absolute. As pure consciousness, you shine with the lustrous light of I-consciousness. Such an indicative assertion would mean that for a highly evolved person there is no need to resort to absorptive methods that are dependent on physical or mental effort. It is so because no physical effort or mental exertion can illumine the already illumined nature of the individual. It means that an individual being is full of divine illumination on account of him having nothing else than pure consciousness (*Tantrāloka-viveka,* 2.2: *upāyairnaśivobhāti*). The transcendental experience that is experienced by practicing this method so empowers the adept as would free him from the fetters of bondage. According to the Trika thinking, this Null Method is considered to be the most excellent means precisely because it not only leads to the experience of one's subjectivity as being divine (*ātma-vyāpti*), but also terminates in the experience of the Unity of Being (*śiva-vyāpti*). Accordingly is this experience identified with the plenitude of transcendental bliss (*ānanda*). Accordingly such a person "who has practiced submergence in Śiva (*śiva-samāveśa*) and has perfectly recognized his powers of knowledge and action as being the pure freedom of the Lord can then know and do all he desires even though he is still associated with the body. He is not only liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*), in the ordinary sense of the word, but he is basically free because he uses at will the powers belonging to the supreme Lord and lives in eternal freedom" (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī,* 4.1.15).

Insofar as the "method of Śiva" (*śāmbhava-upāya*) is concerned, it is practiced by the adept at that point of time when he fails to achieve the necessary spiritual benefits by following the other methods. This method is also known as the Method of Will (*icchopāya*) as well as the Method of Non-Difference (*abheda-upāya*) (ibid., 1.2.30). It is such a method in terms of which the mind, body or the intellect are used as tools for effecting the inward absorption. Instead of making any kind of effort, the aspirant is asked to tranquilize the mental operations in such a manner as would facilitate the attaining of steadiness of the mind. Although the light of consciousness is shining within, yet it remains concealed due to the debris of ideas that continuously emerge and submerge in the ocean called mind. It is the appearance of the reflection of ideas in the mind that conceal the self-shining light of I-consciousness. Just as the purity of the crystal is regained upon the removal of the reflection of various colours, so is recognized the self-shining nature of consciousness upon the tranquilization of the stream of ideas in the mind. Consequently the self-shines in such a manner as to be the object of cognition to itself. It means that it is the self that has the direct and mediate (*aparokṣa*) cognition of itself as being of the nature of light. In this self-cognition is recognized the fact that it is the self that is the doer, the deed and the instrument that accomplishes the deed. It is a method that stabilizes the mental operation in such a manner as would lead to the cessation of ideas. In this manner is gained the self-abiding (*śva-sthitī*) state (see *Anuttarāṣṭakā*, v. 2). The Method of Śiva ultimately terminates in the Null Method the moment the stability of mind is gained. In this manner is realized the spiritual goal of identity in terms of liberation from bondage.

स्थित्युत्पत्तिलयैर्लोकत्रयस्योपक्रियास्विह।
एकैवेश भवच्छक्तिः स्वतन्त्रं तन्त्रमीक्षते॥१०७॥

107. sthity-utpatti-layair-
lokatrayasyopakriyāsviha/
ekaiveśa bhavacchaktiḥ
svatantraṃ tantramīkṣate//

Trs.: It is, O Lord, through emanation, maintenance and dissolution that thou, for the good of the threefold world, does not neglect other means (in the context) of independent means.

Comment: It is through the three powers of emanation, preservation and dissolution that the divine creative activity is carried out. By carrying out these three creative acts, the Lord thereby is being favourably benevolent to us. These creative acts of the Lord have to be considered as being a favour to us precisely because their very source of origin is nothing else but the divine bliss (*ānanda*). The Lord engages in the activity of objectivity the moment he so reflects within himself the objective universe as if it is separate from him, which it essentially is not. Such an act of the Lord may be considered as being of the nature of basic emanation of objectivity. This primordial emanation of objectivity appears in the form of "this" (*idaṃ*), which is to say that the appearance of the objects does not yet take place in terms of separate entities. The continuance of the manifest world in terms of its preservation has to be seen in the context of certain norms – and this activity of the Lord is known as the play of preservation. Upon preserving the world for some period of time, the Lord engages in such an activity whereby its dissolution is affected, and in terms of which it submerges within the Being of Paramaśiva. In the process of manifestation, preservation and dissolution the Lord himself appears in the form of a limited being (*paśu*). As a result of this, the Lord, in the form of a limited being, forgets his essential nature as being identical with Śiva. It is Lord Śiva himself who manifests himself as the universe as well as in the form of limited entities that constitute the universe. When engaged in the process of dissolution of the universe, the Lord thereby dissolves it into himself. In this manner the outside frame of the world is now unified, through the process of reversion, into the essential nature of the Lord, which would mean the establishment of the non-dual state of Being.

त्रिलोक्यामिह करत्रातस्त्रिताप्या नोपतापितः।
तस्मै नमोऽस्तु ते यस्त्वं तन्निर्वाणामृतह्रदः॥१०८॥

108. trilokyām-iha kastrātas-
tritāpyā nopatāpitaḥ/
tasmai namo'stute yastvaṃ
tannirvāṇāṃṛtahṛadaḥ//

Trs.: O Protector! (Tell me) who is there in this world upon whom the threefold pain has not been inflicted? We bow, (in the midst of this pain), unto thee (precisely because) thou art such an ocean of immortal nectar that has the (capacity) of extinguishing (the threefold pain).

Comment: The very nature of life-in-the-world is to undergo, in one way or the other, the three forms of pain, which consist of physical pain (*ādhibhautika*), mental /spiritual pain (*ādhyātmika*) and pain from the above (*ādhidaivika*), meaning thereby the supernatural source of pain. Whenever an existent suffers from physical disorder or ill-health, there is the emergence of the sensation of pain. And the origin of this pain is nothing else than the imbalance between the body and the mind. Next form of pain is either mental or spiritual. Mental pain is given rise to when the negative propensities, such as, attachment, greed, envy, etc., become so dominant as to chart out such course of life that is inflicted by the pain of inward disorder.

In such a scenario arises mental depression, which terminates in the restlessness and disquiet of the mind. Due to the turbulence in the mind arise such waves, in the form of thoughts and desires, that lead to experiences that are very painful. Also pain, both at physical and mental levels, comes into being on account of the orientation of *saṁsāra*, which is to say that *saṁsāra* is so structured as to lead to the experience of sorrow. An embodied being undergoes the process of pain on account of it being subject to becoming. Whatever has an origin must necessarily undergo through such phases as would be characterized by growth, old age, ill-health, and death. Due to this temporality of life-in-the-world is experienced, in one form or the other, pain. Then there is pain that has its origin in the supernatural. Whatever natural catastrophes are experienced, they are such which are beyond

human control like, for example, epidemic, flood, etc. Thus one who is born, lives in the world, and passes away, suffers from pain in various forms, or, should we say, is devoured by the pain of finitude. While undergoing the process of pain, there is lurking desire in an individual mind for the deliverance from this pain. Who is it who has the power and ability to deliver one from the pain that is, as it were, innate to the empirical life? It is Lord Śiva alone who has the power of bestowing the boon of *nirvāṇa* upon the devotee. *Nirvāṇa* is such a state of complete cessation in which pain, whatever its form may be, exists no more. So I accordingly offer my salutations to Lord Śiva for being so benevolent as to confer on his devotee the redemptory state of deliverance, which is the state of cessation, namely, *nirvāṇa*.

कृत्रिमापि भवद्भक्तिर-कृत्रिमफलोदया।
निश्छद्मा चेद्भवेदेषा किं फलेति त्वयोच्यताम्॥१०९॥

109.kṛtrimāpi bhavadbhaktir-
akṛtrima-phalodayā/
niścchadmā cedbhavedeṣā
kiṁphaleti tvayocyatām//

Trs.: (What a wonder, O Lord, it is to observe) that even the artificial (external) devotion of thine brings about such fruits of (realization) that are unconstructed. Had (thy devotion) been (internally) unconstructed (or straight from the heart), tell me, then, what form of fruits would have resulted?

Comment: The devotee is in the state of mental confusion on account of having allowed the arising of the doubt in the mind. The question is: If thine artificial devotion is capable of bearing so many spiritually benevolent fruits, then what kind of fruits will spontaneous or unconstructed devotion of thine be able to bear? Obviously the answer would be enormous amount of fruits. In the midst of this doubt is to be found the answer that is appropriate. Howsoever thine devotion may be artificial or showy, yet it is devotion that is offered unto thee. As a result of this, it loses its

character of artificiality by transforming itself into a devotion that is thine alone. The so-called artificial devotion has no ability to bear spiritual fruits, but it bears fruit of wisdom on account of becoming thy devotion. Whatever kind of fruit we may obtain from the so-called artificial devotion, it is due to the fact that it is the loving devotion for Lord Śiva alone.

तच्चक्षुरीक्ष्यसे येन सा गतिर्गम्यसे यया।
फलं तदज जातं यत्त्वत्कथाकल्पपादपात्॥११०॥

110. taccakṣur-īkṣyase
yena sāgatir-gamyase yayā/
phalaṃ tadaja jātaṃyat-
tvatkathākalpapādapāt//

Trs.: That (indeed may be considered real) knowledge/vision which leads to the realization/visualization of Lord Śiva. That is the (actual) movement which reaches unto thee (alone). And, O Unborn One, the real fruit is (said to be) that which is yielded by the heavenly tree (on account of listening) to thy holy teachings.

Comment: Whatever forms of perception or cognition we may be having while leading an empirical form of existence in the world, it is always characterized by incompleteness and imperfection. Therefore, a knowledge that is of the form of incompleteness (*apūrṇakhyāti*) is rightly equated to ignorance. Ignorance is not to be treated as being equivalent to the absence of knowledge. It is, rather, to be viewed as being such knowledge that is full of errors, and so accordingly not a fit instrument or vehicle that could lead to the appropriate goal of self-realization. According to the Trika, true knowledge is free from the cobwebs of errors with regard to the understanding of the essential nature of Being. The true knowledge (*pūrṇakhyāti*) emerges the moment the concealing veils of *māyā* and the corresponding three impurities are removed through the practice of "self-burying" (*samāveśa*). It is through contemplative absorption that the perfect non-dual knowledge dawns in the adept, and accordingly the redemptory goal is reached

as well as visualized. Likewise is to be considered that form of walking real (*yayā gamyate*) that leads to the attainment of the supreme state (*paramaṃ*). When an adept moves towards the Divine, he accordingly is rewarded with such a fruit that grows only on a heavenly tree (*pādapa*), which is to say that the reception of this fruit occurs through listening to the "word of God," which is revealed in the scriptural texts.

The question, at this juncture, that needs to be responded is this: How to validate the validity of knowledge that it is truly the knowledge of the Divine? The response of the Trika is: Knowledge does not need any external agency to validate it. Knowledge simply validates itself by itself. This assertion of Trika would mean that it is innate to knowledge to validate itself. Moreover, all forms of knowledge should be considered to be valid unless contradicted by another knowledge. It is coherence or non-contradiction (*bādhābhāva*) that is considered to be the real test of knowledge (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.7.6). If knowledge is coherent and suffers no more from the defect of contradiction, then such knowledge should be viewed as being valid. In this context it is also asserted that there exists no distinction between knowledge and reality, because of the former being the appearance of the latter. Therefore what one knows as knowledge is but reality itself. Does this mean that the illusory knowledge should be treated as being identical with the knowledge of reality? A Trika thinker would have no compunction in asserting upon the identity of illusory knowledge with reality. It would be argued that the illusory knowledge is real to the extent it lasts. It is only upon the negation of illusion that we come to know that the knowledge we had during the period of illusion is illusory. From this it must not, however, be construed that the Trika adumbrates a view that upholds that knowledge itself is reality. The Trika, rather, is of the view that there is hierarchical gradation that is constitutive of the idea of reality. The objective world should not be seen as a mental project of an individual mind. It should be seen as the reflection of the cosmic mind in its own mirror, which is Paramaśiva. If this be the case, then it would mean that the empirical knowledge, from the perspective of absolute standpoint, has the same value that is ascribed to illusory knowledge. Such a gradation of knowledge

would mean that there are levels of knowledge/reality, namely, the absolute level of truth and the relative level of truth.

श्रेयसा श्रेय एवैतदुपरि त्वयि या स्थितिः।
तदन्तरायहृतये त्वमीश शरणं मम॥१११॥

111. śreyasā śreya evaitadupari tvayi yā sthitiḥ/
tadantarāyahṛtaye tvamīśa śaraṇaṃ mama//

Trs.: The repose that (exists in thy) blissful light is (considered to be the best) welfare among (all the available) welfares. As (thou art), O Lord, my refuge, (so) remove (all such) obstructions/ impediments that emerge in (the path) of that welfare.

Comment: The verse points out the fact that the experience of the spiritual state of "joy of joys" (*śreyasaśreya*) is possible only when the adept, through introvertive contemplation, enters the state of the Fourth (*turya*), which continuously palpitates with the sweet ecstatic joy of immortality. However, the adept, while traversing the spiritual path of Śaṁkara, comes across the hurdles, in the form of impediments (*antarāya*), that are seen to be responsible in stunting the spiritual growth of the adept. The adept realizes the stark fact of spiritual life that unless these impediments are not removed (*hṛtaya*), there will exist no possibility of any kind of progress. The adept experiences the state of joy of joys the moment there is an intense shower of grace upon him, and as a consequence of this grace impediments as impurities are so dissolved as would allow the emergence of such spiritual vision that is permeated by non-dualism. It is on account of supreme grace (*śaktipāta*) that the adept attains the state of total liberation from the fetters of bondage. Freedom from bondage liberates the adepts from every dependency in terms of which existential contingency is experienced. It is, thus, grace that is seen to be the main instrument insofar as the removal of impediments is concerned.

अहो स्वादुत्तमः शर्व सेवाशंसासुधारसः।
कुत्र कालकलामात्रे न यो नवनवायते॥११२॥

112. aho svāduttamaḥ śarva-sevāśaṁsā-sudhārasaḥ/
kutra kālakalā mātre na yo navanavāyate//

Trs.: Aha! The devotional nectar of Śiva is (excellently) excellent as well as (so) sweet as to be tasting (its sweetness forever). In which part of time does not this (devotional nectar) give rise to ever new (wondrous) miracles.

Comment: There is a desire lurking in the recesses of the mind, and the desire is for such a kind of capacity by which the mind may easily be able to concentrate itself on the idea of Śiva. In other words, the desire that the adept has been cultivating in the mind is to realize such a form of thinking as would enable him to visualize the Lord mentally. However, the desire for the Lord, at the same time, has transformed itself into the nectar (*rasa*) that is exceedingly sweet and excellent (*svadutama*). It is this very craving for the Lord which is absolutely so sweet as would lead to its identification with the divine nectar. This longing for the Lord is sweet like nectar precisely because it is transforming itself into new and ever new experiences of joy. The very thought that arises concerning Lord Śiva becomes the springboard for fresh and ever new experiences that are nectarine in nature.

मुहुर्मुहुरविश्रान्तस्त्रैलोक्यं कल्पनाशतैः।
कल्पयन्नपि कोऽप्येको निर्विकल्पो जयत्यजः॥११३॥

113. muhurmuhur-viśrāntas-
trailokyaṃ kalpanāśataiḥ/
kalpayannapi ko'pyeko
nirvikalpo jayatyajaḥ//

Trs.: Victory unto the one who is singular, constant, unborn, and who, while being of indeterminate (nature), manifests, through his countless (projective) imagination, the triadic world ever again (and again).

Comment: It is *a priori* accepted by the Trika thinkers that the threefold world owes its origin to, or has its origin in, Paramaśiva,

who, being unborn, is beyond the determinate restraints of temporality. Since Paramaśiva is unborn, it means that he is by extension immortal, viz., he is not subject to death. That which is unborn and undying is free from such change that is the characteristic feature of the objective world. It is on account of its changing nature that the world is considered to be transitory and ephemeral. In contrast to the world of change, Paramaśiva is said to be unborn, constant, and unique. While in itself unchanging, Paramaśiva at the same time is seen to be the origin of the changing world. Like the Buddhists, the Trika thinkers accordingly interpret the temporality of objectivity in terms of the doctrine of momentariness, which means that things and objects exist momentarily. However, this rule of momentariness is not applied to the Self, and that is why it has been defined as being unborn and imperishable. This momentariness of objectivity is interpreted to mean that there is an unceasing activity involved on the part of Paramaśiva with regard to the emergence and dissolution of the threefold world. It is this constant activity of emergence and dissolution that is constituted by momentariness in terms of time scale.

मलतैलाक्तसंसार – वासनावर्तिदाहिना।
ज्ञानदीपेन देव त्वां कदा नु स्यामुपस्थितः॥११४॥

114. **mala-tailākta-saṁsāra-**
vāsanāvarti-dāhinā/
jñānadīpena deva tvām
kadā nu syamupasthitaḥ//

Trs.: When shall I, O the Effulgent One, come close to thee with the lamp of knowledge that has a burning wick containing the residual traces of the world, which has been made moist by the oil that is (full) of impurities.

Comment: The desire in the heart of the devotee is burning in such a manner as to transform itself into a prayer. He is experiencing darkness of difference in terms of such a distance as may not be possible for him to cover. Instead of this distance of

difference, the devotee wants to obtain such a lamp of knowledge which would eliminate the surrounding darkness/ignorance. However, this lamp of knowledge has a wick which is, as it were, soaked in the oil of three impurities of *āṇava, māyīya* and *kārma.* It is these impurities that have transformed themselves into oil, and so the worldly wick of the lamp continues to burn. It is with the aid of light that I continue to conduct the affairs of life in the world. Thus this wick represents the entire body of *saṁsāra.* However, the flame that ensues from this wick burns, at the same time, the very seeds of *saṁsāra.* It is with the light of this lamp of knowledge that I would like to gain access to thee, so that I may remain close to thy feet.

Every empirical individual being suffers from an innate impurity, known as *āṇava-mala,* which is being equated to *moha* on account of it being of deluding nature. From a cosmic perspective, this impurity is manifested by the universal will of the Lord at the time of universal manifestation. It is on account of this impurity that the essential nature of Paramaśiva is so concealed as to give rise to ignorance and in terms of which the universal self is erroneously identified with the not-self. This obscuration of the essential nature results, at the individual level, in such forms of knowledge or action that are limited in scope and range. It is the consciousness of incompleteness (*apūrṇatva*) that is experienced by the individual being on account of this impurity. It is this basic impurity that is seen to be the basic cause of *kārma-mala,* or the impurity of action. It is under the rubric of this impurity that an individual performs such deeds which are responsible in giving rise to fruits that have to be reaped in the form of future births. This chain of rebirths will continue till the time one goes on performing deeds under this impurity. It is due to this impurity that an individual becomes an associate of impressions (*saṁskāra-s*), and accordingly his psycho-physical activity is so limited as to be confined to the impurity of difference (*māyīya-mala*). It is the sense of difference that is what constitutes the erroneous mode of existence of an empirical being.

निमेषमपि यद्येकं क्षीणदोषे करिष्यसि।
पदं चित्ते तदा शंभो किं न संपादयिष्यसि॥११५॥

115. nimeṣamapi yadyekaṃ
kṣīnadoṣe kariṣyasi/
padaṃ citte tadā śaṁbho
kiṁ na saṁpādyiṣyasi//

Trs.: If thou, O Lord, would (consent) to (pour out) thy state of (grace), even for a moment, into my consciousness, which is (already) cleansed of impurities, then thou would have accomplished all for me.

Comment: It is a fact of life that the empirical form of existence is full of such defects (*doṣa*) that prevent an individual from having a right approach to knowledge and action. Whatever an individual existent, at this level, may know or do, it is always constrained by the sense of limitation or by the sense of difference. All our knowing and doing, thus, is both limited and full of the sense of difference. The sense of limitation or difference emerges on account of the defect that is responsible in concealing the essential nature of Paramaśiva. Suffering from the lack of knowledge concerning the essential nature of the Self is equated to what, broadly speaking, is called ignorance (*ajñāna*). Ignorance, within the Trika framework, does not entail the absence of knowledge (*jñānābhāva*). Instead of the absence of knowledge, ignorance is spoken of such a form of knowledge of reality that is imperfect or incomplete (see *Tantrāloka-viveka,* 1.25: *nanuajñāna-śabdasya apūrṇamjñānaṃ-arthaḥ*). If viewed from a positive perspective, ignorance would denote some kind of knowledge, although it may be full of defects. If seen negatively, it is a knowledge that is imperfect. Were we to identify ignorance with the absence of knowledge, then there would exist no possibility for knowing anything. The very insufficiency of empirical knowledge means that there is a desire lurking within us for more knowledge. Were we, on the other hand, to be blessed *ab initio* with perfect knowledge, then also there would be no possibility of knowing anything more precisely because we have known what had to be known. Insofar as we lead an embodied form of existence, we shall continuously be hankering for more knowledge. It is a fact of life that the insentient entities alone suffer from the absence of knowledge (*Tantrāloka,* 1.58). In contrast

to insentient entities, sentient entities are blessed with some forms of knowledge. As the embodied being experiences knowledge as being a form of ignorance, so he is pleading with the Lord that he may send such grace upon him as would lead to the emergence of perfect knowledge, a knowledge that is free from the erroneous contradictions. It is through the descent of grace that the impurities of every kind will be eradicated, and accordingly the emergence of knowledge will be facilitated. The devotee is asking the Lord please make my mind clean from defects. Even if this experience of freedom from impure defects is experienced only for a short time, his existential purpose would have been served precisely because he would have achieved whatever he had to achieve.

धन्योऽस्मि कृतकृत्योऽस्मि महानस्मीति भावना।
भवेत्सालम्बना तस्य यस्त्वदालम्बनः प्रभोः॥११६॥

116. dhanyo'smi kṛtakṛtyo'smi
mahānasmīti bhāvanā/
bhavet-sālambanā tasya
yastvadālambanaḥ prabho//

Trs.: O Lord, I am blessed (precisely because) I have accomplished what had to be accomplished, and (so accordingly) I am great– such a kind of feeling or (sentiment) is fruitful to him who has thou as his substratum/base.

Comment: In this verse is expressed the inexhaustible gratitude unto the Lord for having been the very basis of existence. Were the Lord not to be the basis of existence, then there would have been no existence at all. Since I exist, it means that I exist precisely because my being has its abode in the Lord itself. With this kind of thinking, the devotee utters the words of thankfulness for being fortunate (*dhanyo'smi*). He is fortunately filled with such forms of blessings that directly terminate in the emergence of the knowledge of identity with the Lord. He is fortunate precisely because he has accomplished what had to be accomplished (*kṛtakṛtyo'smi*). What is it that he has accomplished? He has accomplished the final goal

of life, which is characterized by the non-dual experience of identity with Paramaśiva. Since he has achieved what he was meant to achieve, he thereby is "great" (*mahān*), meaning thereby he has become all-pervading precisely because he has successfully transcended the dual structures of temporality. The devotee has achieved all these goals of life by realizing that the very basis of his beingness is none other than the Lord himself.

शुभाशुभस्य सर्वस्य स्वयं कर्ता भवानपि।
भवद्भक्तिस्तु जननी शुभस्यैवेश केवलम्॥११७॥

117. śubhāśubhasya sarvasya
svayaṃ kartā bhavānapi/
bhavadbhaktistu jananī
śubhasyaiveśa kevalaṃ//

Trs.: Though thou art the doer or (source) of both what is good and what is sinful, yet, O Lord, it is from thy devotion alone from which proceeds what is good.

Comment: In this verse is expressed the basic doctrinal point of view concerning the origin of good and evil. Since it is *a priori* accepted that the universe, prior to its manifestation, exists potentially in identity with Paramaśiva, which means that there exists no separation between the Absolute as Godhead and the unmanifest universe. The unity between the two–Paramaśiva and the universe–is the same that occurs between the peacock with its beautiful plumage and the juice of the egg. Prior to the attainment of manifest condition, peacock and the juice of the egg exist in perfect identity. It is this very principle of identity that is applicable to the universe at that point of time when it exists in an unmanifest condition. The sense of difference, however, comes into being when the universe attains the condition of phenomenal manifestation. When, however, universe is dissolved, it attains the same condition of identity with Paramaśiva which prevails in unmanifest condition. In whatever form the universe may be, it owes it's being to none other than Paramaśiva itself.

The Trika interpretation concerning the emergence and dissolution of the universe tells us that in the divine plan of Paramaśiva nothing happens without a purpose. Whatever Paramaśiva does or does not do has a specific *telos*, which is to say: purpose. The purpose of both emergence and dissolution is meant for the good and welfare of all. The Lord, while giving rise to the universe, gives an opportune opportunity to all the existents to work out their salvation. Likewise the dissolution of the universe is meant to offer rest to those beings who are full of fatigue and tiredness on account of transmigration. The emergence and dissolution is symbolically equated to the day and the night. The emergence of the universe is equated to the dawn. As we begin to engage in various activities upon the emergence of dawn, so the individual beings are asked to work for their salvation in the state of wakefulness, represented by the day. While working during the day ceaselessly, we become tired, and so fatigue overtakes us. It is the solitude of the night that offers rest. The period of dissolution of the universe is to be treated as a kind of long night during which the weary souls are offered rest from the cycle of rebirths. The emergence and dissolution is also equated to the opening (*unmeṣa*) and closing (*nimeṣa*) of the eyes of Lord Śiva. It means that the emergence of the universe is equated to the opening of the eyes of the Lord, whereas the closing of the eyes represent the dissolution of the universe. In relation to the yogī, it means that he experiences both these processes of emergence and dissolution within himself (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.1.3).

Also it is the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute that is seen, in the form of self-will (*svecchā*), as the cause of both the movements of emergence and dissolution of the universe. Paramaśiva, while engaged in the activity of cognition (*vimarśana*) of self-autonomy, is so delighted by his absolute freedom as would lead to the emergence of desire towards externalization. It is in this state when Paramaśiva through his autonomous and unrestrained (*aniruddha*) self-will manifests the reflections of his own powers, which take the form either of emanation or dissolution of the universe (see *Tantrasāra*, chap. 1). Thus the appearance of the entire universe occurs in the form of reflections against the

background of the self, which is Paramaśiva. While these reflections may appear in the ocean of supreme consciousness, yet they do not affect it in the manner the purity of crystal is affected by the reflections of various objects. The reflections of the universe in the mirror of consciousness do not bring about any kind of deformity in its purity. The "I" as the light of consciousness remains pure. It is Paramaśiva himself who within himself is continuously engaged in reflecting the images of contingent beings, of limited lordship, of *māyā,* of *avidyā,* of desires (*vāsanā*-s), of non-discrimination (*aviveka*), of false knowledge, of desire for action, and so on. In short, this entire expansion of what we perceive and experience, externally and internally, is the play of the glorious powers of the Absolute in the form of reflections. It is this activity of the Absolute that is constitutive of his freedom. It is absolute freedom because it is unconditioned and unrestricted (see *Śivadṛṣṭi,* 1.2).

प्रसन्ने मनसि स्वामिन्किं त्वं निविशसे किमु।
त्वत्प्रवेशात्प्रसीदेत्तदिति दोलायते जनः॥११८॥

118. **prasanne manasi svāmin-**
kiṁ tvaṃ niviśase kimu/
tvatpraveśāt-prasīdettad-
iti dolāyate janaḥ//

Trs.: There is a doubt (lurking in the mind) of a devotee, O Lord, as to whether thou entered the mind because it has attained purity or is it thy entrance that (terminates) in the attainment of purity of the mind?.

Comment: The question that is put before the Lord is in the form of a doubt. The seeker of truth wants to know as to when does the Lord enter the mind of the individual? Does the Lord enter the mind when it has attained pefect purity, or is it your entrance into the mind which could be seen as the main cause for its purification? Which of the two standpoints should we hold to be true? The question could be answered within the doctrinal formulation that

asserts the theory of other-dependence. It is a theory which maintains that whatever we are, we are precisely because of divine will. When this principle of other-dependence is applied to the purification of the mind, it would mean that the very attainment of the state of purity is because of the fall of divine grace (*śaktipāta*). How can self-effort fructify in realizing the state of purity of the mind unless it is sprinkled with nectarine drops of grace? Self-effort bears its appropriate fruit only when it is made moist with the enlivening drops of grace. If this be the case, it would amount to saying that it is entrance of the Lord into the mind of the devotee that makes it free from deformities, which is to say that it is grace along with self-effort that terminates in the realization of the state of purity. According to the Trika thinking, this shower of grace is a free divine gift of Lord Śiva, which is to say that the descent of grace is not dependent upon one's merits. Thus grace is termed as being causeless (*ahetukī*). If grace is a free gift of Lord Śiva, then the question arises as to why only few are showered with this gift called grace. Does not this act of God of favouring some with grace and not others amount to divine arbitrariness? According to the Trika thinking, God does not at all favour some at the cost of others. He sends his grace to those who deserve it, who seek it, and who are open to it. As a free gift, God showers grace upon those who surrender unto, and seek refuge in, Paramaśiva (*Tantrāloka,* 13.117-18). The measure of grace that one receives is dependent to what extent impurities have been removed. There are some who, through spiritual praxis, have thinned the impact of impurities, whereas others have not. The very inclination towards following the path of spirituality is itself the result of grace. Most of us are in a state in which the impurities have not reached the point of ripening. The gradual process of ripening of impurities is called *malapāka.*

Grace is nothing else than a free gift of God's divine will. This gracious activity has been accepted both in terms of enjoyment (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*) (ibid., 13.276). Insofar as self-effort in the context of grace is concerned, it is not denied its role. Whatever kind of self-effort is made towards the spiritual upliftment is itself seen to be the result of grace. Thus self-effort fulfills its

goal when it seen as being the result of grace itself. It is, therefore, grace which is the initial point of spiritual stir within an individual. Even the devotional attitude towards God is itself the result of grace. The moment the divine grace falls upon the individual, that very moment he surrenders unto Lord Śiva. Thus divine grace and worship of God go together, one intensifying the other, and thereby enhancing each other. Such an understanding of grace would mean that the very emergence of the disposition towards spirituality within the individual would be considered as being the result of grace. As to when and in what manner an individual may reach the ultimate liberation is also dependent on grace. The step that an adept takes towards the cultivation of the spirituality is dependent to what measure he receives grace (see *Tantrasāra* on grace).

निश्चयः पुनरेषोऽत्रं त्वदधिष्ठानमेव हि।
प्रसादो मनसः स्वामिन् सा सिद्धिस्तत्परं पदम्॥११९॥

119. niścayaḥ punareṣo'tra
tvad-adhiṣṭhānameva hi/
prasādo manasaḥ svāmin sā
siddhis-tatparaṃ padaṃ//

Trs.: This is our conclusion, O Lord, (the state) of pleasantness of mind (seems) to be the result of thy grace/entrance, and that (alone) is the (perfect) accomplishment (on account) of it being the supreme state.

Comment: In this verse is clearly recognized the fact that it is grace of the Lord alone that is responsible in making the mind pure. As a consequence of this purity, the mind thereby becomes a fit place for the entrance of Lord Śiva. Upon your entrance into the mind, it could easily be your permanent abode. Your permanent presence in the mind would mean that our intimate relationship in terms of oneness would be established for ever and ever.

वचश्चेतश्च कार्यं च शरीरं मम यत्प्रभो।
त्वत्प्रसादेन तद्भूयाद्भवद्भावैक भूषणम्॥१२०॥

120. vacaścetaśca kāryaṃ ca
śarīraṃ mama yatprabho/
tvatprasādena tadbhūyād-
bhavadbhāvaikabhūṣaṇaṃ//

Trs.: It would be (on account) of thy grace that, O Lord, all my verbal, mental and physical activities should wear (only) one ornament of thine identity.

Comment: In this verse the poet expresses his gratitude to Lord Śiva by acknowledge that whatever he is in terms of speech (*vacaḥ*), body (*śarīraṃ*), mind (*cateḥ*) and activity (*kāryam*), it is because of thee, which means that all these constituents of mind have emerged or come into existence on account of thy grace (*tatprasādena*). Since these four constituents of mine owe their existence to thee alone, so it is my prayer that they should become the ornaments of thy nature (*tvatbhavatbhāvaikabhūṣaṇaṃ).* What does it mean? It means that whatever I utter, it should be such utterance as would sing the songs of thine praise alone. It means that whatever thoughts I may think in my mind, they should be only about thee. Whatever undertakings I may undertake through my body, let them be dedicated to thee. And let this body, above all, be allowed to become the means of carrying out thy commands in the world. Let the entirety of mine be dedicated to thee.

स्तवचिन्तामणिं भूरिमनोरथफलप्रदम्।
भक्तिलक्ष्म्यालयं शंभोर्भट्टनारायणो व्यधात्॥१२१॥

121. stavacintāmaṇiṃ bhūri-
manorathaphalapradaṃ/
bhaktilakṣmyālayaṃ śaṁbhor-
bhaṭṭanārāyaṇo vyadhāt//

Trs.: Bhaṭṭa Nārāyana is (so blessed as to have) composed (such a) wish fulfilling hymn, (namely, *Stvacintāmaṇi*), which is a bestower of the fruit of the entire mass of wishes, and which (accordingly), in the form of devotion, is the abode of Lakṣmī.

Comment: Bhaṭṭa Nārāyana has composed this devotional hymn, which is the abode (*ālayaṃ*) of supreme wealth (*lakṣmī*) in the form of devotion (*bhaktī*). In other words, it is a hymn (*stva*) of such a jewel (*maṇi*) that fulfills all our wishes (*cintāmaṇi*). The term Lakṣmī does not only represent the wealth, but is to be seen as symbolizing the supreme consciousness itself. Lakṣmī as consciousness and the abode of devotion, is identical with Paramaśiva. The one who has got this precious jewel of devotion is blessed with such divine splendour as to have all the wishes fulfilled. Since this devotional luxuriant wealth embodies the essential nature of Paramaśiva, so they who sing it will have all their wishes fulfilled.

Iti śrīmahāmāheśvarācārya varya śribhaṭṭanārāyaṇa viracitaḥ stvacintāmaṇiḥ samāptaḥ//

Thus ends the *Stavacintāmaṇi,* composed by the venerable great Shaiva teacher, *Śrī Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa*

Appendix: A Brief Outline of Trika Śaivism

Whatever forms of doctrine the Trika may have enunciated, they are not different from other systems of Indian thought insofar as the ultimate goal of life is concerned, which is basically characterized by an earnest search for self-knowledge. It is basically the way we look at life-in-the-world that is largely responsible in determining one's metaphysical understanding concerning the nature of reality/truth, and so thereby is determined as to what kind of ultimate goal of life should we pursue and in terms of which the meaning of life could be discovered. The ultimate goal of life in terms of its meaning is so conceived as would terminate in the final solution of problems that embodied existence entails. The question, then, arises as to what it is that is constitutive of the fundamental problem of life in the world. It is agreed upon by most of the religions that the basic problem that is constitutive of embodied existence is nothing else than the reality of bondage, which, existentially speaking, could be interpreted to mean the lack of freedom. In theological terms, this lack of freedom as bondage is an interpretation as would be denoting the cycle of rebirth. Such a conception of bondage has its roots in the conception of equating "freedom" with the essential nature of reality. It is, thus, within the framework of such a conception of reality that the Trika soteriological goal as being identical with freedom can properly be appreciated.

It would mean that the Trika system of thought does not differ from other schools of Indian philosophy or from religious denominations insofar as quest for the meaning of life-in-the-world as well as the ultimate goal are concerned. It is as much concerned with such existential problems as suffering, bondage and conditioned nature of embodied existence as would be any genuine

religious or philosophical system of thought. In its search for such ways and means, both theoretical and practical, that would terminate in the discovery (*āviṣkaraṇa*) of ultimate meaning of life, the Trika has discovered such a philosophical tool, in the form of *pratyabhijñā* or "recognition," whereby the possibility as to who we are actually can be an actuality.

The Trika Non-Dualism

Upon discovering the philosophical notion of *pratyabhijñā* as an appropriate tool of self-discovery, the Trika itself, with the passage of time, came to be known as the School of Recognition (*pratyabhijñā-vāda*) (cf. Mādhavācārya refers in his *Sarvadarśanasaṁgraha* to the Trika system as the School of Recognition). The fundamental metaphysical premise of the Pratyabhijñā, and thereby of the Trika, is such a conception of reality as would be non-dualistic in orientation but theistic in pragmatic terms. It is non-dualistic in the sense of looking at the Absolute as being the sole reality. It is such a conception of the Absolute as would authenticate the non-dualism (*advaita-vāda*) of Śaṁkara. However, the Trika differs from the non-dualism of Śaṁkara when it bestows such properties upon the Absolute as would result in the emergence of an absolutism that is sufficiently theistic. It is at this point of reflection that the Trika, while expressing its synthetic approach to reality, completely diverges from the course that Śaṁkara has taken with regard to the notion of reality as being non-dual.

As to why the Trika has taken a different route than that of Śaṁkara is because it does not want to have its Absolute so impersonal, inactive and indeterminate as to lead to a kind of nihilism that Nāgārjuna has propounded. In order to safeguard itself against the dangers of nihilism, so the Trika has propounded the doctrine of the Absolute in terms of both "light" (*prakāśa*) and "cognitive awareness" (*vimarśa*). What it amounts to saying is this: the Absolute as consciousness does not simply shine (*prakāśayate*), but is also aware of itself as being shining (*sphurattā*). The Absolute as Light illumines, like the light of the sun, everything that is out there, which is to say that the very manifestation of anything is possible because of the Absolute being of the nature of Light. It is

to this aspect of the Absolute as consciousness (*cit, saṁvid*) to which the *Kaṭhā Upaniṣad* (2.2.15) has referred to when the following statement is made: "Upon the shining of That (viz., of *brahman*), everything (whatever there is) shines. Because of its light, everything is made to appear" (*tamevabhāntaṃ anubhāti sarvaṃ, tasyabhāsa sarvaṃ idaṃ vibhāti*).

While being luminous, the Absolute as consciousness establishes itself as being so transcendent as to be beyond the reach of mind and intellect, which would, from an epistemic point of view, denote its ineffable character. As being both ineffable and transcendent, the Absolute thereby would be both inconceivable and inexpressible. As such it is impossible to formulate such positive formulations that would terminate in the emergence of knowledge of the Absolute that is conceptually understandable and expressible. It boils down to saying that the Absolute can be approached only through such negations as have been formulated by the Upaniṣads, viz., *neti, neti*. Whatever intellectual formulations in terms of dogmatics may have been formulated, they have to be treated merely as approximate explanations (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1.2). Since there is no possibility of knowing the Absolute as it is in-itself through conceptual formulations, so the only way of knowing as what the Absolute is in-itself, according to the Trika, is in terms of self-realization (ibid).

Insofar as the Absolute is being viewed as a transcendent, ineffable, and luminous consciousness, there is no divergence of opinion between the Trika and the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṁkara. While agreeing with Śaṁkara about the Absolute as being an all-inclusive ground (*ādhāra*) of existence as such, Trika at this point of reflection, however, goes much further in its metaphysical formulation by asserting that the Absolute also is self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśamaya*). The insertion of this new dimension in the metaphysical thinking of the Trika is necessitated by the fact of avoiding the danger, on the one hand, of slipping into nihilism and, on the other hand, of not allowing the Absolute to become an inert entity (*jaḍa*). We know, for example, that a diamond shines, but we also know that a diamond is unaware of its luminosity on account of it being inert. It is not, however, the case with

Paramaśiva. Paramaśiva is aware of itself as being essentially of the nature of Light. In the language of the Trika, it denotes the immediate,non-relational awareness of itself as being an Ego free from the encumbrances or adjuncts (Kṣemarāja, *Parāprāveśikā*, p.2: *akṛtriṃ ahaṁ itivisphuraṇaṃ*). It is this awareness of itself as being identical with Ego that is encapsulated by the term *vimarśa*. As to why the Trika thinks of the Absolute as being an Ego is to safeguard itself from the possibility of reductionism, and thereby the conceptual explanation that is offered concerning Paramaśiva is in terms of it being cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*) (ibid., p. 2: *yadi nirvimarśaḥsyat aniśvarojaḍaścaprasajyet*).

The Trika conception of the Absolute, thus, is such as would be possible to formulate a definition in terms of which action (*kriyā*) is given its due place. In viewing the Absolute as being luminous light and cognitive awareness, the Trika thereby can with ease maintain the nature of reality as being both transcendent (*viśvottīrna*) and immanent (*viśvamaya*) (*Parātriṁśikā-vivaraṇa*, v. 9). This conception of the Absolute, in theological terms, is viewed as representing the perfect unity of Śiva and Śakti, of transcendence and immanence, of knowledge and action, of consciousness and bliss. As Absolute, Paramaśiva is one without a second, and so is transcendent to all that that falls within the continuum of space-time. Accordingly Paramaśiva is referred to as being supreme (*parama*) and absolutely transcendent (*anuttara*). In contrast to its transcendence, the Absolute as I-consciousness is seen to be the creative source of whatever there is in the phenomena, nay, of phenomena itself, which would mean that Paramaśiva is the foundation of all the forms of existence. It is this aspect of the Absolute that is equated with its immanence (*Tantrāloka*, 1.104).

At the theological level of thought the Absolute as transcendent is concretized by Paramaśiva, whereas it is Śakti that is seen to be embodying the principle of immanence. In terms of philosophical language it would mean that the Absolute is identical both with Being and Becoming. The Absolute is Being when reposing on itself, but expresses itself as Becoming when engaged in the creative activity of emission (*visarga*) of phenomenal categories (*tattvas*)

(ibid., 1.1.54). In the language of phenomenology, it would mean that Being as self-shining consciousness expresses itself as the manifest category in terms of the process of Becoming.

The Trika premise concerning the Absolute as being self-shining consciousness is proved by the fact that each individual being is conscious of itself. If the Absolute were destitute of consciousness, then it would be reduced to the state of inertness, which would mean that everything would be identical with the chaos of darkness because nothing would be manifest. The very fact that every phenomenal category is manifest, and thereby a knowable, proves that consciousness is of the nature of light. From this it is not difficult to conclude that whatever exists phenomenally, exists precisely because of consciousness being of the nature of light (ibid., 1.59-60). Since every phenomenal category is manifest, and thereby knowable, on account of the light of consciousness, so it would be appropriate to maintain that existence *per se* shines because of it being identical with the Light of consciousness (ibid., 2.16,30). It is because of the shining nature of the Absolute as consciousness that the Trika non-dualism is referred to, and rightly so, as being perceptually experiential (*pratyakṣādvaita-vāda*) (*Mālinīvijaya-vārttika,* v. 1).

The Absolute, as already pointed out, is not simply identical with self-shining consciousness, but also vibrates (*spandanaṃ*) with its own power or energy (*śakti*), which is equated with the activity of cognitive awareness (*vimarśana*). At the theological level of thought this self-cognitive awareness is so personified as to be given the nomenclature of the Goddess. It is the concept of the Goddess that encapsulates within itself the Energy of the Absolute as Śiva. The Absolute, thus, is seen as the unity of Śiva (viz., of consciousness) and Śakti (viz., the Goddess). When Śiva is said to be non-different from its own Śakti, it means that Śakti embodies Śiva's power of self-awareness, which, when translated into actuality, denotes the "power of will" (*icchā-śakti*). This understanding of the Absolute as being endowed with activity differentiates the Trika non-dualism from the one that is adumbrated by Śaṁkara. While the Absolute (viz. *brahman*) of Śaṁkara is simply devoid of activity, the Trika has such an Absolute as would be both self-shining

consciousness as well as self-reflecting awareness, and so accordingly is reflected the dynamic nature of the Absolute (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.8.11). It is through self-awareness that the Absolute reflects itself to be of the nature of shining consciousness. Even Śaṁkara seems to be subscribing to this viewpoint when he says: *śivaḥśāktyayuktoyadibhavatiśaktaḥprabhavitum/ nachedevaṃ devo na khaluspandituṃapi//*

The power of self-awareness (*vimarśa-śakti, icchā-śakti*), according to the Trika, is innate to Śiva, and so accordingly expresses the idea of absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) (ibid., 1.2.4) as well as the infinite bliss (*ānanda*), which are actualized through the cosmic activity of emission, preservation, and dissolution. In addition to these three cosmic activities, there are two more activities of the Absolute, which are those of concealment and grace/revelation (*Tantrāloka*, 1.70). It is in terms of self-awareness that the Absolute is spoken of as being identical with perfect self-consciousness (*pūrṇāhantā*), and so accordingly is equated with the absolute Egoity or I-ness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*). It is as Ego that the Absolute is aware of itself as "I am," which simultaneously denotes Śiva's awareness as being identical with "freedom" (*svātantrya*), and thereby with "bliss." Being identical with freedom, and accordingly with bliss, the Absolute thereby is said to be brimming over with glorious splendour (*aiśvarya*). As Śiva is non-different from its own Śakti, so the self-shining nature of consciousness is said to be non-distinct from the self-awareness of consciousness, which explains the vibratory character of consciousness. Likewise the self-luminosity of consciousness as self-awareness as well as absolute freedom and bliss, which, though seen to be pertaining to Śakti, are identical because bliss is nothing but the awareness of the spontaneous inner activity of consciousness, which apart from self-awareness is impossible to experience.

The metaphysical conception of the Absolute as consisting both of self-shining luminosity and cognitive self-awareness is a view that is quite contrary to the philosophical viewpoint of the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṁkara. For the Advaita Vedānta the Absolute is simply pure consciousness, and so devoid of activity. For it considers the subject-object duality as well as any kind of activity as being the

product of *māyā*, which is so elusive power as to be identical with illusion. Being elusive, it is difficult to say as to whether it exists or does not exist. The Trika rejects this viewpoint of the Advāita Vedānta on the ground that we cannot say as to whether a thing exists or not precisely because a thing either is or is not. It cannot be both simultaneously. The Trika also rejects the Vedāntic viewpoint concerning the Absolute. Since the Absolute is devoid of activity, so it would mean that it is no better than an object that is lifeless. That which is devoid of activity cannot truly be said to be existing. The Absolute of Śaṁkara may be a shining consciousness, but, being lifeless, it does not know itself to be shining. Moreover, Śaṁkara thinks that the objective world is completely false (*mithyā*) on account of it being the product of elusive *māyā*. For the Trika such a view of the Absolute or of the world is unacceptable, because it considers the universe as being the real emanation (*visarga*) of Paramaśiva, which means that whatever appears exists, prior to its manifestation, potentially within the Absolute (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.5.10). Whatever exists within the Absolute exists as an integral "I" (*ahaṁ*). While existing as pure "I" within the Absolute, the objective universe, upon its manifestation, is referred to as "this" (*idaṃ*). The objective universe, thus, is the appearance of the Absolute, which is equated to the reflection that is reflected in a mirror (*Tantrāloka*, 1.92).

This Trika conception of the Absolute as being the union of identity of Śiva and Śakti, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, of *cit* and *ānanda*, would mean that the type of non-dualism that is being enunciated is basically a synthesis of opposites, or what may be called the synthesis of *coincidentia oppositorum*. Such a view of the Absolute would be reflecting the Hegelian dialectic of thesis and antithesis, culminating ultimately into the unity of synthesis. It is in terms of the synthesis of opposites that the perfect unity of Being (*tādātmyatā*) is realized. There is, however, the problem of explaining logically as to how the opposites can co-exist or become a unified whole. It is like saying that heat and cold, shade and light, cannot only co-exist, but can also achieve identity in such a manner as to lead to the negation of their individual identities. The response of the Trika to this problem is in terms of the

assertion that the so-called opposites that appear in thought are, in fact, non-different in terms of their essence. It would, thus, appear that we speak of the union of the opposites for the sake of linguistic convenience. In fact, there is only one reality, and that reality is but Paramaśiva.

The Emission of the Universe

The Absolute of the Trika, namely, Paramaśiva, is not only self-shining (*sva-prakāśa*) consciousness, but is also self-reflecting awareness (*vimarśamaya*), and in terms of which it is aware of itself as "I am." It is through its self-awareness that the autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute as self-will (*svecchā*) is concretized when the objective universe is emitted (*vamana*) from the Being of the Absolute. Were the Absolute to be devoid of cognitive self-awareness, and of freedom in terms of self-will, then it would no more be considered as being the Absolute, but would be treated like an object that is inert on account of its destitution of life. Accordingly says Abhinavagupta: "If the Supreme Reality were (devoid of power) of manifesting itself multitudinously, but remained (as it were) encased within its uniform solidity, it would (no more) be supreme power or consciousness, but would be something like a jar" (ibid., 3.119). While viewing the Absolute as being both consciousness and will, Trika thereby is in a position to say that Paramaśiva is both the knowing subject (*jñātā*) and the doer (*kartā*) of deeds. This knowing and doing of the Lord is so autonomous as to be identical with the freedom of the Absolute.

For the Trika the Lord's activity stems basically from his being so blissful creatively as to let it overflow in terms of the emission of the objective universe. This creative blissful nature of the Lord is referred to as *vimarśa* or *śakti*. It is this aspect of the Lord that contains within itself all that there exists objectively, or what we call the manifest condition. In the *Parātriṁśikā* (v. 24) we are informed that whatever is manifest exists, prior to its manifestation, potentially in the Lord. As to how the manifest categories exist potentially in the Lord is explained in terms of the illustration of a banyan tree existing potentially in the seed: "As the extensive banyan tree exists in the form of potency in the seed, so also does

this universe, in its entirety, exist potentially in the heart of the Supreme." This analogy of the seed and the tree is also illustrated with another example of a peacock who, prior to its birth, lies potentially with its variegated and colourful plumage in the juice of the egg. Both these analogies seem to have its roots in the *satkārya* causal doctrine of the Sāṁkhya, which maintains that the effect, prior to becoming an effect, exists potentially in the cause. This causal doctrine of the Sāṁkhya is not free from certain logical flaws. One of the flaws is that the seed, in the process of giving rise to a plant, gets itself completely destroyed. With reference to Paramaśiva it would mean that he would end up in self-destruction while giving rise to the manifest universe. Also if it is maintained that the effect is nothing but the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of the cause, as would the analogy of peacock imply, then the universe would be nothing more than the outcome of the transformation of Paramaśiva. In order to avoid these pitfalls of this causal theory, and thereby also of these analogies, the Trika accordingly has resorted to the doctrine of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*) or to the theory of reflection (*pratibimbavāda*) to account as to how the process of manifestation of the universe is accomplished. At an appropriate place we shall be discussing as to what the Trika theory of appearance is in the context of its assertion that the universe is simply the reflection (*pratibimba*) of the Absolute.

Being absolutely free to do what he wants to do, the Great Lord (Maheśvara) accordingly manifests himself as this universe. The Absolute is spoken of as Maheśvara on account of him being sovereignly free, which means that the Great Lord has such nature (*svabhāva*) as to have sovereign will (*svātantrya*), which is identical with absolute freedom. The ideation with regard to the manifestation/emission of the universe that is in the mind of the Lord gets objectified on account of the sovereign will. This Trika understanding of the Absolute would mean that Maheśvara is totally free to emit or not to emit the universe out of himself, which means that there is neither the inner nor the outer necessity that would necessitate the emission of the universe. If this be the case, then the autonomy of the Lord would be beyond the space-time causality. Free will of the Lord, according to the Trika

thinking, would denote such an absolute power of the Lord whereby he accomplishes all his tasks in accordance with his will, which is unrestrained, and unimpeded in its flow. This is how Abhinavagupta has explained, in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī* (quoted by Jaideva Singh in the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p. 17), as to what is constitutive of the divine freedom of the Lord:

> Therefore the Lord, Parameśvara, whose own-being is Consciousness of the nature of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, who is the undefinable, ever-present Reality appears as subject from Rudra down to immovable entities, as objects like blue, pleasure, etc., which appear as if separate, though in essence they are not separate, through the glorious might of *svātantrya*, which is inseparable... from *saṁvit* and which does not conceal in any way the real nature of the Supreme. This is the exposition of the *svātantryavāda*.

Although manifesting itself as the universe that is subject to change, yet the Absolute remains untouched by any kind of change on account of the fact that It transcends the changing phenomena. The Absolute is referred to as being pure and self-reflecting consciousness due to the fact that, on the transcendental plane of its own background (*sva-bhitti*), it manifests out of its own free will this objective universe (cf. *pratyabhijñāḥṛdaya, sūtra* 1). The objective universe, prior to its manifestation, exists within the Absolute as a potentiality, which means that the universe in its unmanifest condition is completely identical with it. It would, thus, mean that the Absolute alone is the background (*bhitti*), the ground (*ādhāra*), and the material (*upādāna*) for the manifest universe.

This view of the Absolute as being identical with what apparently is outside of it establishes thereby its all-inclusive character, which means that nothing fundamentally exists apart from, or outside of, it. As pure Subject, the Absolute is endowed with the powers of will, knowledge and action – and it is through these powers that the process of manifestation is eventuated (Bhāskarācārya, *Bhāskrī*, 2.2.11). All such powers really express the blissful as well as the playful nature of the Absolute, which is identified with the absolute freedom. By terming the Absolute as being self-reflecting consciousness, the Trika thereby asserts that the Absolute is pure Ego. If the Absolute were destitute of self-reflection, viz., of Egoity,

then we would reduce It to mere nothingness (*śūnyātā*). These powers of the Absolute, according to the Trika, are not a chimera projected by imagination, nor are they to be considered as a kind of superimposition (*adhyāsa*) by *māyā*, as is the case with the *brahman* of Śaṁkara. As these powers are actual and real, so it is through these powers that the Absolute as Paramaśiva manifests itself as the objective universe. From this premise it may be concluded that everything is Śiva and Śiva is everything, and so Śiva is both the Subject as well as the Object.

The error concerning the nature of the Absolute emerges when the object, which in our case is the universe, is considered to be outside of or independent of the projecting consciousness. Since everything is subsumed in the unity of Being, so whatever kind of difference is experienced objectively is to be treated as being false. This is so because every kind of manifestation exists within the Supreme Self. The manifestation of the universe should not be treated as a kind of modification (*pariṇāma*) or as a modification without change (*avikṛta-pariṇāma*) or as a false appearance (*vivaṛta*) of the Absolute. The phenomena as manifestation (*ābhāsa*) are real in the sense of them existing identical with Paramaśiva. The term *ābhāsa* in the Trika does not have the same connotation as *vivaṛta* or false appearance has in the Advaita Vedañta. In the Trika the appearance of the Absolute as the objective universe is real. Also the terms like *māyā* and *avidyā* are not treated in the Trika the way they are understood in the system of Advaita Vedānta. The Trika considers *māyā* as being such a real power of the Absolute whereby the One appears as the Many. Insofar as the term *avidyā* is concerned, it does not denote absence of knowledge, but signifies such forms of knowledge that are deficient, imperfect and full of errors (*apūrṇa-khyāti*) (*Tantrāloka*, 1.25). Were we to think of ignorance as being equal to the absence of knowledge, then we would be reducing everything to the state of inertness and chaos, which however is not the case (ibid., 1.58).

The Nature of the Manifest

The Trika philosophical thought has developed its own specific conception concerning the origin of the universe. It believes that

it is free and unimpeded will (*svātantrya*) that is to be considered as the principal reason for the emission (*visarga*) of the universe. According to the theory of "free will," it is the sovereign will of the Absolute as Godhead that is seen to be the real cause of the manifest universe. The Absolute as Godhead emits the universe out of itself the moment he wills its manifestation. The will to manifest the universe is equated with the divine playfulness of the Lord. To be playful is the innate nature of the Lord, and it expresses itself in the form of the emission of phenomena. While giving rise to the categories of existence (*tattva*-s) out of itself, the Lord engages in the creative activity without depending on anything other than itself. As the Godhead emits every category out of itself, so it is assumed that each category, prior to its emission, is necessarily existing potentially in identity with it. This idea of an entity, prior to its manifestation, existing in the form of potency is directly borrowed from the Sāṁkhya theory of causation, which is known as the theory of effect existing in identity with the cause (*satkāryavāda*). The Sāṁkhya theory of causation says that every effect, prior to its actualization as effect, exists potentially in the cause. It amounts to saying that the entire universe exists as the very self of God, viz., as an infinite and eternal "I." This divine Ego as consciousness is not static at all. It is characterized by what is called vibration (*spanda*). Thus the supreme consciousness is seen to be identical with eternal throb or vibration. It is on account of the vibratory nature of consciousness that the emission of the universe eventuates unimpeded.

The total number of the manifest categories is said to be thirty-six. The process of manifestation occurs from Paramaśiva to the category called Earth. The first five categories, from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, are termed as pertaining to the "pure path" (*śuddhādhava*). These categories are said to be belonging to the path that is pure on account of them being free from the taint of difference, which is to say from the impurity of *māyīya-mala*. Paramaśiva as the metaphysical Absolute appears Śiva and Śakti: the former representing the Absolute, whereas the latter Godhead. Śiva and Śakti constitute the luminous and the reflective aspects of the Absolute. The third manifest category of pure course is said

to be Sadāśiva, namely, the Eternal Śiva. This manifest category is equated with God when absorbed in the playful activity of creative manifestation of phenomena. The fourth category is that of Īśvara, which is to say of the Lord. The Absolute manifests itself as Īśvara when engaged in the activity of Godhead. Finally, we have the category of Śuddhavidyā, or Pure Knowledge. It is such a manifest category in terms of which the divine revelation as grace is accomplished. In other words, the appearance of the Absolute as "pure knowledge" denotes that the knowledge of this category is absolutely free from conceptual fallacies that bedevil the empirical modes of understanding. The first five manifest categories are considered to be the basis of the appearances of emanation. It is the absolute free will of Paramaśiva that is seen to be the cause of these five categories. As these first five categories of manifestation are said to be free from the notion of duality, so each category thereby shines as being identical with the infinite I-consciousness. From Paramaśiva to Śuddhavidyā there is complete absence of the sense of difference. The categories from Śuddhavidyā downward are said to pertain to the "impure path" (*aśuddhādhava*), which is to say that all the categories henceforth would be dominated by Māyā. These categories are given the epithet as being impure on account of them being under the influence of the products of Māyā, called "veiling factors" (*kañcuka-s*). It is from the Māyā-tattva onwards that the manifestation of the categories is characterized by grossness.

The obscuration of I-consciousness is determined to what degree a particular category is gross. Paramaśiva, while manifesting itself in the form of gross categories, appears as a limited existent, on the one hand, and, on the other, as insentient element. The insentient element serves as the basis of what is called inert materiality (*Tantrāloka,* 9.149). The sentient element, being obscured by Māyā, is reduced to finitude, and so accordingly is called atomic (*aṇu*) or bound being (*paśu*). The bound being, on account of its finitude, identifies the eternal and the infinite I-consciousness with the finite ego or self. By imposing the sense of limitation upon itself, the not-free bound being differentiates himself from others in terms of his empirical identity. This sense

of differentiation results in what may be called the disease of self-forgetfulness, which is to say that the bound being forgets the fact that he is non-different from the Absolute, and thereby also from the other. As the impure manifest order is pervaded by the impurity of *māyā* (*māyīya-mala*), so it is Īśvara, in the form of Śrīkaṇṭhanātha, who actualizes the impure order of phenomenal manifestation (ibid., 1.61, 79-80; 3.196, 206; 4.10; 9.148).

The Trika system rejects the Sāṁkhya theory of causality in terms of which a cause is seen to be transforming (*pariṇāma*) into an effect, or should we say that the effect, prior to its actualization as an effect, exists potentially in identity with the cause. The Trika rejects the application of this theory of causality in the context of its doctrine of cosmology. If God as cause of the universe is viewed as transforming itself into phenomenal entities, it would mean that God thereby destroys its own indivisibility. Instead of Sāṁkhya theory of causal transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*), the Trika has postulated the theory of reflection (*pratibimbavāda*) in order to explain the process of appearance of phenomena in such a manner as would not harm the indivisible nature of God. According to this theory, the universe is neither the transformation of Śiva or of his Śakti. As the nature of God is pure luminosity of light, so it is this brilliance of the light of consciousness which projects God as being the cause of the universe in the manner an image of an object is reflected in the mirror. While the mind of God projects the universe in terms of a reflection, there accordingly is maintained the indivisibility of God (*Tantrāloka,* 3.44). God illumines the entirety of phenomena by virtue of being the mass of consciousness-light. Prior to their manifestation or emission, the entire phenomena exist in the Absolute as a potency, which would mean that they shine forth in the Absolute. The shining of phenomena, prior to manifestation, in the Absolute represents their transcendental state (*paramārtha-sattā*) (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā,* 1.5.1; 5.7). The phenomenal entities, while shining as reflections, have both rise and fall within I-consciousness. It is because of this rise and fall that the phenomenal entities suffer from temporal finitude. As they are the appearances of the Absolute, so they come within the ambit of *ābhāsa,* viz., the

manifest categories are construed to be of the nature of the psychic light (*ābhāsa*), which shine as the luster of consciousness (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.1.2.)

The Trika Theory of Appearance

The Trika theory of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*), in contrast to the Advaita Vedānta theory of appearance (*vivarta*), is not only different in its orientation, but has a different goal to serve. The aim of the Trika theory is to establish the fact that the manifest universe, prior to its manifestation, exists as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness in the Absolute. The analogy that is made use of to explain the implication of the theory of manifestation is that of the juice of the peacock's egg. The universe exists potentially within the Absolute prior to its manifestation in the manner the colourful plumage of a peacock exists in the juice of the egg prior to its coming into being. And the analogy is given the nomenclature of logical explanation concerning the existence of a peacock in its egg (*mayūrāṇḍarasanyāya*). In the case of the Advaita Vedānta the objective world, prior to its manifestation, does not exist as undifferentiated mass in *brahman*. The world, instead, is said to be the work of transcendental illusion called *māyā*, and on account of *māyā/avidyā* it is being superimposed upon *brahman*. It boils down to the fact that the so-called objective world is as illusory as is the superimposed snake on a rope. It is at this point of explanation concerning the origin and ontological status of the world that the Trika radically differs from the Advaita Vedānta. Since the universe, prior to its manifestation, exists as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness, it would mean that the universe has to be treated as an expression of *cit/saṁvit*. This assertion of the Trika would mean that whatever appears, whether it is the subject or the object or the knowledge, has to be treated as a manifestation (*ābhāsa*) of the Cosmic Consciousness, which is but the Absolute. Whatever appears or becomes manifest is an appearance in a limited way, which means that every of kind of appearance is subject to some kind of limitation.

As to how this process of manifestation is occasioned is explained in terms of the theory of reflection (*bimbapratibimbavāda*). The

theory of reflection is made use of in order to avoid the pitfalls of the doctrine of causal transformation (*pariṇāma*) as well as of the Vedāntic theory of illusion. As to the theory of reflection in a mirror it is (*darpaṇa-pratibimba-bhāva*) is explained by Abhinavagupta thus:

> As it (so happens that) in a transparent mirror appear (such) variegated images of a city, village, etc., as being different from each other as well as from the mirror, though being non-different from the mirror, even so the world, though non-distinct from the taintless consciousness of Paramaśiva, appears to be different both with regard to the variegated (world) of objects as well as (from) the Universal Consciousness (*Paramārthasāra*, vv. 12-13; vide Śaṁkara, *Hymn to Dakṣināmūrti*, v.1).

The theory of appearance is so made use of so as to establish that the appearances, though appearing distinct, are not distinct from Paramaśiva in the same manner as the reflections of a city or of a village in the mirror are not different, though appearing to be different, from the mirror itself. However, there exists some kind of difference between the reflection in a mirror and the universe as the reflection of the Supreme Consciousness. In the case of the reflection in a mirror, the image that is reflected in the physical mirror is external to the mirror, whereas in the case of Paramaśiva it is not so, because whatever is reflected in the mirror of consciousness is but its own ideation. Also the reflection in a physical mirror is actualized due to the light that is external to the mirror. However, this is not the case with Maheśvara. Whatever Maheśvara as consciousness reflects in its own mirror, is reflected by its own light. Maheśvara does not require, as does the physical mirror, any external light. Also there is another kind of difference that occurs between Maheśvara and the physical mirror. The mirror, being inert, is not at all aware of the reflections that are being reflected in it, whereas Paramaśiva as consciousness is aware of its own ideation that is being reflected in its mirror. The *ābhāsa*, thus, has to be treated as a kind of external projection of the Universal Consciousness. In the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* (1.5.7: *cidātmaiva hi devo'antaḥ-sthitamicchā-vaśādbahiḥ/ yogīvanirupādānamartha-jātamprakāśayet*) this idea has beautifully been explained thus:

None (whatsoever) apart from the Lord, who is pure Consciousness, has (the power) to manifest externally the entire phenomenal world that exists (potentially) within Him. (He accomplishes this task) through the power of His will, just as a yogi does, without (resorting) to the use of any substantive material for this purpose.

The Trika theory of appearance in terms of the analogy of reflection in a mirror is used to delineate the idea that the Absolute, through its own power of free will (*svecchā*) projects the universe on the background (*svabhitti*) of its own consciousness (see *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*, sūtra 1). In resorting to the theory of appearance the Trika thereby attempts to explain as to how the universe in terms of the reflected image in the mirror exists within the mirror-like consciousness of the Absolute. In the process of the manifest appearance the universe appears as if it is different from the Absolute in the same manner as do the reflected images appear to be different from the mirror. It is on account of the powers of differentiation (*apohana-śakti*) and of obscuration (*māyā-śakti*) of the Absolute that the universe is experienced as being different from the Universal Consciousness, whereas in actuality it is not. When we speak of manifestation or appearance, it does not simply mean the appearance of the objective universe, but includes within its ambit the subject, the object, the means of knowledge, the senses, perception, conception, imagination, and so on. It means that the manifest object as well as the manifesting consciousness are identical. Insofar as the experience of difference at the empirical level is concerned, it is apparent on account of it being the outcome of the Lord's powers of differentiation and of obscuration, which, according to the Trika, means that the Lord is as much free to reveal himself as much as he is free to conceal himself.

Manifestation as a Process of Condensation

The Trika theory concerning the manifestation of the Absolute as the universe has at its background the idea that the Absolute, while being of the nature of "vibration" (*spanda*), tends to be overwhelmed by its own blissful glory in such a manner as to externalize itself. This conception of the Absolute as being the

unity of Śiva and Śakti signifies that it is the innate power of Śakti that, as it were, so pushes Śiva as to transgress its own limits of transcendence so as to immanentize itself by manifesting itself as the universe. In philosophical terms the Absolute is said to be pulsating continuously with the innate throb or vibration. It is this inner throb within the Absolute that is seen as the basis for the creative process that terminates in the manifestation of the universe. The flashing forth of the Absolute as the universe occurs, on the one hand, in the condensation or contraction (*saṁkoca*) of the Absolute and, on the other hand, in the coming into being (*uṇmesa*) or expansion (*vikāsa*) of the universe. This dyadic movement denotes that what for the one is contraction is expansion for the other. What it amounts to saying is that the very manifestation of the universe entails simultaneously the contraction for the Absolute.

The flashing forth of the Absolute as the universe parallels the manifestation of the Primordial Speech (*parāvāk*) as the gross speech (*vaikharī*). The Primordial Speech, in its downward descent, so condenses itself as to become the gross speech. It is through the process of condensation or contraction that the Absolute as the Supreme Speech manifests itself as the variegated universe of objects by reducing itself to the level of gross speech. This doctrine of the Absolute becoming the gross universe through the process of condensation has its parallel in the Platonic view of reality as light becoming grosser and grosser through its downward descent. It is in the context of this view that the Trika asserts that every sentient and non-sentient entity is nothing but the gross form of the Supreme Consciousness, which, when put in idealistic format, would mean that nothing exists apart from consciousness. Since everything, according to this view, is nothing but the gross form of Śiva, so the effort of each human being should be to re-discover their essential nature as being nothing else save Śiva itself. In terms of the Pratyabhijñā philosophy it would mean that the "recognition" of oneself as being identical with the light of consciousness, which at the same time is I-consciousness. The mystical illumination of identity as "flashing out" is explained in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā* (1.5.12-14) thus:

Since the Self has been spoken of as consciousness, so it cannot be said to be inert. And so this (consciousness accordingly) is identical with the activity of awareness, (and) due to which we can differentiate it from an insentient object. The (very) essence of consciousness is to be self-aware. It is the Supreme Speech that emerges out of itself, and is (accordingly termed) as the self-sufficiency of God as well as his divine essence. This consciousness (as awareness) is proclaimed as being shimmering, pulsating, supreme (and) unconditioned reality. As the heart of the supreme Lord, it (accordingly) is the essence (of *brahman*).

The very idea of the Absolute as being of the nature of vibration has opened up new vistas of understanding for the Pratyabhijñā philosophy concerning the cosmic manifestation of Maheśvara. Since the cosmic manifestation is the condensation of the Absolute as consciousness, so it is no more considered to be as illusory as is a imposed snake upon a rope. It means that cosmic manifestation is not thought to be illusory in the sense of it being a "superimposition" (*adhyāsa*) upon the unchanging reality called *brahman*. Also cosmic manifestation is not the work, as is the case with Sāṁkhya, of an independent evolving entity called *prakṛti*. For the Trika cosmic manifestation is but the actualization of the latent possibilities within the "heart" (*hṛdaya*) of Maheśvara. These latent possibilities as seeds are actualized when there is a sudden flashing forth from Paramaśiva of countless perceptible objects that are constitutive of the universe.

The flashing forth of the supreme consciousness as the universe is, at the theological level of thought, accomplished by the Goddess as Śakti, which, being of the nature of vibration, characterizes the essential nature of Maheśvara. It is Śakti as the Mother Goddess that, in the process of cosmic manifestation, is responsible in reducing the Absolute, through a series of intermediary stages, into what we perceive as the objective universe of entities. While giving rise to the manifest universe, the Mother Goddess as Śakti so condenses Maheśvara as would facilitate the passage for it to assume the condition of various forms of the sound of the Sanskrit alphabet. Thus the vowels as well as the consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet are seen to be embodying the diversity of the inner possibilities that are innate to Maheśvara's own-being (*Tantrāloka*, 1.54-56). The conception of the phenomenal manifestation as

being the graduated descent of the supreme consciousness parallels the other Trika concept of decreasing of the initial light, which means that consciousness as light becomes grosser and grosser in its downward descent. In other words, it means that more the Light becomes grosser, the more it becomes darker. The concept of the cosmos as being the condensation or diminishing of the initial Light is quite contrary to the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta, which adheres to the notion that considers the universe as the product of *māyā/avidyā,* and so is erroneously being superimposed upon an indeterminate and passive *brahman.* For the manifest universe that we see and experience is false because of it being as illusory as is an oasis in a desert. This view deprives the universe of having any kind of ontological status. Even if it is given some kind of a status, yet it cannot be more than what is accorded to an illusory object during the period of illusion. The universe would be seen to be real to the measure the experience of illusion persists. Upon the negation of the illusion, the universe evidently will stand cancelled, which was, prior to cancellation, experienced as being real in the same manner as dreams are experienced as being real during the dream-period. This view of Śaṁkara is not acceptable to the Trika. According to the Trika, there occurs a real manifestation of the universe when the initial outburst or flashing forth of the vibrating energy of Maheśvara eventuates. It is an outburst in terms of which occurs the continuous emanation of all kinds of objects. It is such a conception of reality that, in the words of Mark Dyczkowski, is "single creative-cum-destructive dynamic" (see *The Stanzas on Vibration.* Albany: Sunny Press, 1992, p.38).

The Trika conception of the Absolute as being both creative and destructive parallels the Pauline concept of God as "emptying" himself of divinity by incarnating himself as Jesus. The emptying of God of divinity is explained in terms of the incarnation as being a kind of insertion of the Divine within the womb of Matter. This insertion of God within Matter denotes, on the one hand, humility of God and, on the other, self-effacement of the Divine. The notion of humility as well as of self-effacement describe the process as to how God annihilates himself by becoming Man-Jesus. By becoming Man-Jesus, God thereby uplifts the bound being (*paśu*) in terms of

becoming a participant in the festival of the unity of Being. When translated into the language of Trika, it would mean that Paramaśiva by becoming, on the one hand, a bound being annihilates himself in the furnace of humility and, on the other hand, would denote that the bound being, through self-annihilation, actualizes adherence to God. This doctrine of self-destruction delineates the idea that it is by self-emptying that the welling up of the Divine within us is actualized. This theology of *kenosis* informs us that God, by annihilating himself, becomes the bound being, as personified by Man-Jesus, and likewise the limited individual through self-effacement realizes his unity with the Divine. Through this two-way movement of self-effacement Man and God meet and encounter each other, and as a result of which is recognized the primordial state of identity that brims over with the nectar of bliss and of immortality. The one who has the experience of the Beatific Vision of identity is spoken of as being liberated-while-living (*jīvanmukta*). For the liberated-in-life everything pulsates with the undifferentiated fullness of bliss. It is an experience in terms of which is proclaimed that Śiva is All (*omnia in omnibus*). The liberated is one who, in the words of Abhinavagupta (*Īśvarapratyabhijña-vimarśinī*, 4.1.15):

> has uninterruptedly practiced (the art of) immersing (*samāveśa*) himself in Śiva and has perfectly recognized (such) energies (as of) knowledge and action as being (nothing but) the pure freedom of the Lord, can then know and do all he desires, though he is still associated with body. He not only is divinized, in the ordinary sense of the word, but he is fundamentally free (to make) use of (such) divine powers (as) belong to Paramaśiva and (consequently) live in eternal freedom.

As Paramaśiva may become contracted in the process of emitting the universe out of itself, so there is no denying the fact that through the self-effacement the individual being is so uplifted as would lead to his releasing from the grip of bondage of limitations, viz. from the bondage itself. St. Gregory of Palmas aphoristically expresses this double-edged movement of the Divine thus: God became Man in order to make Man God. This experience of becoming God is nothing else than the realization of one's essential nature as being Divine, and so identical with freedom and fullness.

It is an experience of transcendence, and Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* (chap. 2) has explained as to what constitutes this transcendent experience. He says:

> All this is therefore one Reality – a Reality undivided by time, unconfined by space, unenfeebled by accidents, unconstrained by configurations, unexpressed by words and unmanifested by norms of knowledge. It is the cause, at its own will and pleasure, of the attainment of the essences of these things, from time to norms. It is sovereignly free Reality, the concentration of beatitude. And I am absolutely It – there, within me, is reflected the universe.
> (Jose Pereira, *Hindu Theology*. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1992, p.38).

The Classification of Categories

The classification of the manifest categories, right from Paramaśiva down to Earth, is said to be consisting of thirty-six categories (*tattva*-s). All the thirty-six categories have been reduced to five divisions (*kalā*-s), and each division contains within itself a certain number of categories as well as worlds (*bhuvana*-s) and the specific kind of subjects that reside in them. The total number of worlds that the Trika has accepted is said to be one hundred and eighteen, and these worlds exists beyond the visible world of which we are a part. Each world is presided over by a Rudra, who is a form of Śiva, or by a Bhuvaneśvara, which is to say by "the Lord of the world." The nature of the subjects who inhabit these worlds is determined by the world that they inhabit. The subjects of these worlds have been so classified as to be of seven types.

The Trika maintains that the manifestation and dissolution of these worlds as well as the process of bondage and liberation of the subjects therein is both controlled and directed by Paramaśiva through his manifold powers. In order to govern these worlds efficiently, Paramaśiva seemingly has delegated some of his powers to the presiding deities of these worlds. Each presiding deity is believed to be the embodiment of some divine power.

The phenomenal manifestation occurs through certain stages of the arc of descent, and at each stage of the descent of the Divine there are given rise to a certain number of categories. A

category (*tattva*) is seen to be representing the essence of several akin categories. It is this essence that binds them together into a whole (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.1.2). The essence of an element is permanent, and so remains intact even at the time of universal dissolution (*pralaya*). The manifest categories, at the time of dissolution, are reduced respectively to their essences. The categories emerge from their respective essences at the time of universal manifestation Even though there are various categories, yet there is, in fact, only one category, and that category is that of Paramaśiva. This is so because Paramaśiva not only contains within itself the essence of all the categories, but also is the essence of everything (*Tantrāloka*, 9.2). Paramaśiva, while manifesting itself as the universe, manifests itself as Śiva, Śakti and Nara. It is on account of this triadic conceptual framework that Kashmira Śaivism is called the *trika*. Correspondingly the entire field of experience, too, has been classified into the triadic states of unity (*abheda*), unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*) and diversity (*bheda*). This classification of existence is equated with a triadic division of Śivatattva, Vidyātattva and Māyātattva. Since the path of objective meditation (*tattvādhvan*) accepts the number of categories to be thirty-six, so it is this number which the Trika accepts as constituting the manifest order from Paramaśiva down to Earth. As it is maintained that the thirty-six categories have their rise and fall within Paramaśiva, so the total number of categories is thirty-seven if we include Paramaśiva also within the continuum of categories.

As the manifest categories pertain to the manifest order, so they are referred to as objective categories meant for intellectual reflection (*prameya-tattva*). The first five categories, from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, are free from the distortions of *māyā*, and so are said to be pure. The subjects that inherit these categories are also pure. Due to their purity, they are aware of their divine powers. As they do not identify the Self with any insentient element, so they accordingly are aware of their identity with the absolute I-consciousness. It is, thus, the undifferentiated awareness that is constitutive of the first five categories, which are Śiva, Śakti, Śadāśiva, Īśvara and Śuddhavidyā.

The philosophical Absolute, when viewed from a theological

perspective, is identified with Paramaśiva, which is the thirty-seventh category when counted from the gross element Earth upward. The Absolute as Paramaśiva is described as having two innate aspects, namely, the static and dynamic. The static aspect of the Absolute corresponds to the passivity of consciousness as being a witness (*sākṣī*) or light (*prakāśa*). It is through the dynamic aspect that the Absolute expresses the five cosmic powers of manifestation, preservation, dissolution, concealment and revelation. While manifesting itself in the form of manifest categories, the Absolute, however, remains in-itself unchanged and undivided. It is the static aspect of the Absolute that really explains the indivisibility as the total unity of Paramaśiva. It is in its static aspect that Paramaśiva appears as Śiva. The appearance of Śiva as Śakti occurs through its dynamic aspect (cf. *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 7.12-14).

Already it has been pointed out that *spanda* denotes the innate resonance within Śiva and Śakti. The initial resonance (*prathamaspanda*) is directed towards the manifestation of phenomenal categories. The actualization of the resonance results in the emergence of the categories of Sadāśiva or Sadākhya and Īśvara. At this level of manifestation the resonance expresses itself as Sadāśiva in terms of an inner movement, whereas the outward movement is actualized in the category of Īśvara (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, 3.1.5). All the manifest categories that are contained within Śiva shine forth as infinite I-consciousness. When the innate resonance is directed outward, it shines forth as "this" (*idaṃ*) of I-consciousness, which indicates the sense of difference or duality. Upon the appearance of the sense of difference, consciousness thereby shines forth as "I am this" (*ahaṃidaṃ*) or "this is myself" (*idaṃahaṃ*), which means that there exists the duality of subject and object (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.1.3). The awareness of "I" as "myself" results in contrasting myself with the other. The sense of difference at this manifest level is not so acute as to result in a kind of unbridgeable duality, which is the bane of empirical existence. There is both the sense of unity as well as of diversity, and so this stage of manifestation is termed as representing the state of unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*). Since this stage of manifestation hangs between complete unity and diversity, so it

has appropriately been called an intermediate stage of manifestation (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 3.1.5). When there occurs the experience of unity-in-diversity (*parāparadaśā*), it is taken to be fifth stage of manifestation, represented by Śuddhavidyā or Sadvidyā. In other words, it is at the fifth stage of manifestation, which is that of Śuddhavidyā, that the experience of unity-in-diversity eventuates (ibid., 3.1).

The first five categories of manifestation, namely, from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, are termed as pertaining to the "pure course or path" (*śuddhādhva*) on account of them being free from the influence of the dichotomizing power of *māyā*. This entire process of manifestation up to the fifth category is, thus, termed as being pure. Once the process of manifestation moves forward, there accordingly begins the operation of the dichotomizing power of *māyā*. The process of dichotomization itself is the creation of the Lord, or what is called Īśvara, which is the penultimate category of pure emanation. It is the creative will of the Lord that manifests itself in the form of the category of Māyā (*māyā-tattva*) (*Tantrāloka*,9.149-50). The function of the category of Māyā is to conceal the essential nature of the Lord (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 3.1.7). It is on account of this obscuration of the essential nature that the Lord appears in the form of a finite being (*aṇu*). In addition to its obscuring power, the category of Māyā also serves as the substantial basis for further diversification of the phenomenal categories. It seems that the category of Māyā in the Trika system seems to be serving the same purpose which the "primordial nature" (*prakṛti*) is made to serve in the Sāṁkhya. It is the Sāṁkhya concept of *prakṛti* that seems to have been transformed into the creative power of God in the Trika thought. It is the Sāṁkhya system that has provided the necessary conceptual framework to the Trika whereby an attempt is made to explain the process of cosmogenesis as rationally as possible.

The experiencing subject, although essentially unlimited, experiences himself, within the continuum of temporality, as being finite and limited. The subjectivity of the subject is experienced as being limited on account of the concealing veils of *māyā*. The function that is assigned to the category of Māyā is to conceal the

essential nature of the subject's subjectivity, and the consequence of this concealment is the experience of finitude. As a result of the obscuring powers of *māyā*, the subject is deprived of the delight of the experience of his own essential nature, which is characterized by infinite bliss. This deprivation of self-enjoyment terminates in the agitative restlessness (*lolikā*) of the subject (*Tantrāloka*, 9.62). The phenomenal subject, however, is not completely deprived of the experience of enjoyment. He does have the capacity, even though a limited one, of experiencing delight objectively through the senses. The very capacity of enjoyment indicates that the subjectivity of the subject is essentially of the nature of bliss. The rays of bliss penetrate the subject's subjectivity the moment *māyā's* hold loses its grip.

The obscuring veils (*kañcuka-s*) of Māyā have been classified as being of five kinds. The first veiling power, called *kalā*, limits the subject's field of action, and consequently the subject remains unaware of his divine power of omnipotence. The second obscuring veil of Māyā is that of "impure knowledge" (*aśuddha-vidyā*). Time and space limit all forms of empirical knowledge. Whatever empirical knowledge we possess is a localized affair. The limitations that Māyā imposes upon the knowledge of the knower results in the deprivation of the subject's omniscience. The third obscuring veil is called *rāga* (attachment). It is on account of attachment that the interests of the individual become restricted. The restricted interests impose such restraints upon the subject's field of action and knowledge that he finds it difficult, nay impossible, to cross over the barriers of his embodied existence. This limited interest also indicates that the individual existent seems to have no liking or preference for knowledge that is transcendental. The fourth obscuring veil that Māyā puts into operation is that of the "law of restriction" (*niyati*). The law of restriction expresses itself through the operations of what we call objective Nature. The laws of Nature operate in such a manner as would result in the curtailment of the subject's autonomy. Subject to the laws of Nature, the individual accordingly experiences such powerlessness as would make him unable to experience the content of self-autonomy. The same is the case with knowledge. For the acquirement of knowledge the

individual subject completely is dependent either on his senses or upon the objects of knowledge that seem to be independent of him. The individual subject, being subject to the laws of Nature, experiences himself as being dependent upon the external factors in relation to knowledge and action. Finally, we have the obscuring veil of time (*kāla*). It is on account of time that the individual subject experiences himself not only as a being who is limited in relation to knowing and doing, but is basically a creature of finitude. The experience of temporality deprives the subject of the joy of immortality. All these functions of the category of Māyā incapacitate the individual existent of knowing as to who he essentially is. It is upon the negation of the obscuring veils of Māyā that the individual recognizes that he essentially is divine, viz., identical with Paramaśiva. This state of absolute knowledge results in the experience of bliss that is free from the distortions that Māyā inserts in the process of manifestation (ibid. 9. 204).

Paramaśiva becomes, as it were, an atomized subject on account of the concealing veils of Māyā. The atomized condition of the Absolute is termed as the condition of *puruṣa*. In other words, a limited individual is nothing else but *puruṣa*. At this point the Trika turns upside down the Sāṁkhya concept of *puruṣa*. For the Sāṁkhya *puruṣa* is passive, and so is in no manner involved in the operations of material Nature (*prakṛti*). As *puruṣa* is pure intelligence, so it cannot, by any stretch of imagination, relate itself to that that is opposite to it, namely, matter. Although caught up in the web of embodied existence, yet its relationship with materiality is tenuous, and is of the same nature that occurs between the reflected object and its reflection. For the Trika, however, the condition of embodied existence itself is given the nomenclature of *puruṣa*, which means that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, unlike the Sāṁkhya, are not seen dialectically opposed to each other, but are viewed as complimenting each other. While complimenting each other, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* thereby also enjoy each other. It is the divisionary power (*kalā*) of Māyā that actualizes the emergence of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (ibid., 9.215). Upon its manifestation, *prakṛti* carries within itself the three constituents (*guṇa*-s) of pleasure, pain and ignorance, which are equated with the three constituent

processes of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* respectively. To the extent these three constituents remain in the state of equilibrium, to that measure the process of manifestation of impure categories (*aśuddhādhva*) does not take place, which means that there is no appearance of pleasure, pain or ignorance. Once this equilibrium is disturbed, there then begins the process of manifestation in terms of which the entire manifest order is given rise to. The manifest order, however, consists of entities that are either enjoyable or unenjoyable. Wherever the strand of goodness (*sattva*) is prevalent, there the limited individual has the experience of joy. This experience of limited joy is facilitated by Śiva's illuminating power (*jñāna-śakti*) of goodness. The limited individual experiences pain on account of the predominance of passion (*rajas*). It is Śiva's infinite power of action (*kriyā-śakti*) that really is responsible in giving rise to experiences that are full of sorrow and pain. The diversity that is constitutive of the manifest order is because of Śiva's power of obscuration (*māyā-śakti*). It is through the power of obscuration that everything, at the manifest level, is reduced to the state of utter darkness – and darkness is nothing else but the concrete representation of ignorance (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 4.1.4). Darkness represents ignorance because it veils the revealing power of knowledge. Knowledge and light go together, whereas ignorance is associated with what may be called the absence of light, namely, darkness.

Paramaśiva is spoken of as God or Īśvara when engaged in the five cosmic activities of manifestation, preservation, dissolution, obscuration and revelation. The objective process of manifestation begins the moment God, as it were, descends to the stage of materiality. The very descent of God to this level denotes that the equilibrium among the three strands of material Nature is shaken up. This disturbance among the constituents of Nature results in the emergence of twenty-three instrumental and objective categories (*Tantrāloka*, 9.225). God causes the disequilibrium among the constituents of Nature when he initiates a kind of stir within the womb of materiality. It is this stir within materiality that really terminates in causing the disturbance among the constituents of Nature. The stir within the womb of material Nature is counted as

one more manifest category between materiality and its product, namely, the intelligence (*buddhi*). It is the intelligence that is the first objective manifest category. Upon the appearance of intelligence comes into being the sense of I-ness (*ahaṁkāra*). Once the sense of I-ness has been actualized, there then emerge sixteen categories, which are the mind, the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, and the five subjective elements of sound, touch, smell, taste and colour.

The Typology of Impurity

Upon emitting out of itself the entire manifest order, the Absolute thereby, in the process of manifestation, atomizes itself by appearing a limited being that is subject to the order of temporality. The sense of limitation or of temporality comes to the fore on account of impurity, which is the product of Māyā. The basic function of impurity may be linked to the mud which, when disturbed, muddies the transparency of water. Likewise impurity puts such a veil upon the inner eye of the individual that he is unable to see clearly as to who he actually is. This veiling of the vision is called ignorance. Once impurity as ignorance becomes operative, the individual thereby experiences the ontological separation from the Absolute. It is this sense of separation that deprives the individual from recognizing himself as being essentially identical with Paramaśiva. Impurity, thus, may be seen to be such a process of obscuration of the free will whereby the individual remains ignorant concerning his essential nature (*Tantrāloka*, 9.65-66).

As impure creation is the result of Māyā's operation, so Māyā leaves its imprint, in the form of impurity, upon the entire manifest order. The basic nature of impurity (*mala*) undergoes a process of development, and at each stage of its development it is given a specific epithet. At the initial stage of its development, it is known to be of atomic nature (*āṇava*). Atomic content of impurity denotes that it is of finite nature, and as such expresses itself through finite beings. The individual who is under the influence of this impurity remains forgetful about his essential nature, which results in the experience of being a limited individual. It is the sense of limitation

or of finitude that comes into being on account of this impurity (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 3.2.6). The individualized consciousness, in contrast to the cosmic consciousness (*parāsaṁvid*), is experienced as empty (*śūnya*) as is the vacuum within a pitcher. The voidness of empirical consciousness tells us that its illuminating power, as it were, has been obscured to such an extent that it seems to have lost the capacity of revealing anything to itself (*Tantrāloka*, 6.9-10). The function of *āṇava-mala* is to give rise to a kind of fractured awareness within the individual that terminates in the identification of the Self with the not-self, which is equated to pure voidness. There are, however, some limited beings who, though under the influence of *āṇava-mala*, do not think of themselves to be as empty as is the interior of a grave or of a flute (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 3.2.4).

The fundamental philosophical thesis of the Trika is that nothing exists apart from Supreme Consciousness (*citi*), which, in metaphysical terms, is called the Absolute. The thesis is explained non-dualistically in terms of which it is asserted that the Absolute is everything and everything is non-different from the Absolute. This identity between the Absolute and the phenomenal entities is recognized at that level of knowledge (*vidyā*) where the operations of Māyā are neutralized. Insofar as an individual remains under the influence of Māyā, to that measure his mode of understanding will be dependent upon the subject-object dichotomy. For such an individual the actualization of knowledge will be an impossible task unless he not only objectifies his own consciousness, but allows the objects out there to confront him. This confrontation between the knowing subject and the knowable object is actually the basis of all forms of empirical knowledge. The knowing subject, while in the process of acquiring empirical knowledge, experiences difference between himself and the object that is to be known. The sense of difference is the result of what is known as "the impurity of difference" (*māyīya-mala*). The impurity of difference either functions together with "the atomic impurity" (*āṇava-mala*) or separately (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 2.2.9). It is upon the foundation of atomic impurity upon which the impurity of *māyā* builds its structure, as the former is the base for every kind of impurity.

Thus far we have analyzed as to how the atomic impurity and the impurity of difference operate and function. The former impurity gives rise to the sense of limitedness or finitude, whereas the latter one is responsible in creating the sense division within the consciousness of an individual. The third form of impurity is called "the impurity of action" (*kārma-mala*). This form of impurity is said to be the most awesome on account of it being the result of all the past deeds that one has performed in previous lives. Upon the maturity of deeds, the individual has to reap the fruit of what he has done in the past. What we are at the present is because of the deeds that have been performed by us in the past lives gone by. The present condition in which we find ourselvas is the outcome of *karman*. The doctrine of *karman*, perhaps, owes its origin to the way Nature functions. It is observed that nothing occurs within Nature by chance. Whatever takes place in Nature has behind it a definite cause, which means that an event is caused by such an agency that has the possibility of being a cause. It is on this analogy of cause-and-effect that the theory of *karman* is interpreted in relation to what an individual does or does not do. Since every cause must terminate in an effect, so it means that every action as cause must give rise to a definite corresponding effect in terms of a fruit. When further elaborated, it means that our mode of existence is determined by the deeds that we have performed. It is this concept of action that is responsible in giving rise to a full-blown doctrine of the cycle of rebirth. Since action is seen as the cause of transmigratory existence, so it is equated with impurity.

The Classification of Subjects

As already pointed out above, there are various realms, and each realm is said to be inhabited by such subjects that are appropriate to it. There is, thus, a hierarchical correspondence between the realms and the existents that inhabit them. It is the quality of the realm that determines the quality of the subject that is going to inhabit it. It is within this hierarchical framework that the beings that inhabit the various realms have been classified into seven types. The lowest type of subject is termed as Sakala. The Sakala subject (*pramātṛn*) is at the lowest stage of hierarchy on account of

him being the most impure existent among all the existents. The subject of this type exists under the influence of all the three impurities (*mala*-s), and the impurities are the *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala* and the *kārma-mala*. Being The most impure, the existential condition of such a subject is most pitiable (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 3.2.10). And the subject of this type has its abode in the phenomenal world of which we are a part and parcel. The subject of this type is completely oriented towards objectivity (*prameya*), which means that he is so engrossed with the cognition of objectivity that he remains totally destitute of the awareness concerning the transcendent. The Sakala subject has its abode in objectivity. Insofar as the extension of the Sakala state is concerned, it extends from the element Earth (*pṛthvi-tattva*) to that of *puruṣa-tattva*, which would be equivalent to the Sāṁkhya self-monad.

The second type of subject, called the Pralayākala, is little better than the Sakala subject. The beings of this type, at the time of cosmic dissolution, revert to the state of dormancy. The beings of this kind do not operate under the divisionary power of Māyā, and consequently do not get involved in such obscuring powers of Māyā as, for example, *kañcuka*-s. Existing apart from the products of Māyā, called *kañcuka*-s, they are, therefore, spoken of as the Akala, viz., existents that are indivisible. This state of existence is not the result of good deeds. It comes to be on account of the reversion, at the time of cosmic dissolution, to the state of dormancy, which expresses itself as being disembodied. Being without a body, the subjects of this type are accordingly spoken of as "the beings of dissolution" (*pralayākala*-s). It is due to their disembodied existence that these subjects gain freedom from the operations of Māyā during the period of dissolution (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 3.2.6-7). At the end of the cosmic dissolution, which is to say: upon the re-emergence of the manifest order, the subjects of this type regain their embodied form of existence, and consequently become subject to the cycle of rebirth (*Tantrāloka*, 9.139). Accordingly it may be concluded that the state of a Pralayākala subject is that of negation due to the fact that the entire world of objectivity, during the state of dissolution, is negated. The state of experience that eventuates is that of complete unawareness. It is a state that may

be compared to the state in which one sinks into a comatose-like condition (*mūrccha*). It is in such a state of unawareness in which the Pralayākala subject abides. The extent of this state is limited to the realm of Māyā.

The third kind of existent on the hierarchical ladder of ascent is known as the Vijñānākala, viz., an existent of cognition. The subjects of this kind are free from the divisionary impact of Māyā, which is to say that they do not perceive things in terms of difference. This capacity of having the perception of non-duality comes to them from the cognition they have of the Absolute. The knowledge of identity that they have of the Absolute is of partial nature. The cognitive experience of identity pertains only to the luminous, and not to the dynamic, aspect of the Absolute. This partial knowledge of the Absolute enables them to rise above the state of the void, which is the lot of the Sakala subjects. As a result of this partial knowledge of the Absolute, the Vijñānākala beings arrive at the threshold of pure I-consciousness, which means that little effort is needed for having the perfect cognitive experience of identity. This little effort results in enabling these subjects to attain a higher state of existence whereby perfect cognition of identity may be realized. The Vijñānākala subject may be said to be the one who is on the path of spiritual progress. On account of this striving the subject has the partial awareness of the Absolute as being non-dual (*Tantrāloka*, 9.80; see also *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ, sūtra,* 13). Such a state is experienced by the Vijñānākala subject on account of being under the impact of *āṇava-mala*, while having freed himself from the impact of other two impurities, namely, from the impurities of *māyiya-mala* and *kārma-mala*. The state of Vijñānākala is said to be existing at the level of *mahāmāyā-tattva*, which lies between the *māyā-tattva* and *śuddhavidyā-tattva*. The *mahāmāyā* is figuratively considered as a *tattva* and not in actuality. The function of this *tattva* is to give rise to the regressive process of dissolution.

The subject who is qualitatively higher than the Vijñānākala is known as Mantra as well as Vidyeśvara, viz., "the master of knowledge." This state of the subject is also known as that of *śuddhavidyā*. The subjects of this type have the power of having

perfect cognition of identity with the Absolute as pure consciousness (*saṁvid*). Not only do they experience the Absolute as pure consciousness, but also come to realize their innate divine powers. The subjects of this type, however, still experience the phenomenal order in terms of difference, viz., in terms of "this" rather than "I" (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī,* 3.2.9). The subject of this state, on account of the removal of all three kinds of impurities, is so engrossed with the Self as to have the perfect knowledge of himself as being nothing else but consciousness, which is of the nature of bliss, will, knowledge and action. This state, though not stable, is the embodiment of Śiva. And the *mantra* of this state is *ahaṁ, ahaṁ, idaṁ, idaṁ,* which discloses the experience of the subject, though characterized by the realization of I-ness, is not totally free from this-ness. Since the subject of this state still has the experience of this-ness, it means that the experience is unstable and in terms of which is experienced both the I-ness and this-ness.

The subjects that are pure and completely free from the impact of three kinds of impurity are said to be of two types, namely, Mantreśvaras and Mantramaheśvaras. Their spiritual maturity is so mature as to result in the cognitive experience of the Absolute in terms of unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*) (ibid., 3. 1.2). The experience of unity-in-diversity denotes that the spiritual journey has not yet been completely perfected. In terms of subjective experience it means that these existents have only partially experienced the Fourth state (*turya*). Although no active impurity of any kind is to be found in them, yet the active seeds of the basic impurity (*āṇava-mala*) still linger in them. These existents have still to work out their salvation in terms of attainment the state of existence that is totally free from the taints of impurity. It is the existent of deep spirituality alone who, upon merging in the Absolute, shines forth as an autonomous subject. For such a spiritual being the experience of existence as "this-ness" merges in the "I-ness" of subjectivity. The Mantreśvara subject (*pramātṛn*) is also known as Īśvara-pramātri, which denotes that such an existent is really the "sovereign master of *mantra,*" which is *ahaṁ* or "I." It is a state that is characterized by consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action, which are constitutive of the essential nature of the

Absolute. Accordingly this state is termed as that of Iśvara. Insofar as the experience of this state is concerned, it does not differ much from the state of Mantra. It, however, differs from the state of Mantra insofar as the stability of the state is concerned. The Mantra subject of this state has the experience in terms of *idaṃ-ahaṃ*, which discloses that the objective universe, which is indicated by the term *idaṃ*, is not at all false, but is simply the expansion of the Self. Insofar as Mantramaheśvara subject is concerned, he represents the state of Sadāśiva. In the state of Sadāśiva the subject has the experience of identity with the Absolute. Upon entering into this state, there is no possibility of any kind of regression. It is a state that is characterized by the *mantra* of *ahaṃ-ahaṃ*, which entails the awareness of objectivity as being nothing but the expansion (*sphāra*) of the Self.

Finally, we have the state of Śiva. The subject of this state is none else than Śiva himself. In the above states there is difference between the subject and the state, which means that the subject and the state differ from each other. In the case of Śiva, however, there does not occur any kind of difference: both the subject and the state are identical. It means that nothing exists apart from or outside of Śiva. The *mantra* of this state is *ahaṁ*, viz., the universal "I." Since it is "I" that prevails, so it means that the so-called "this," viz., objectivity, completely disappears.

In the first six states both the state and the subject shine simultaneously together. When it comes, however, to the state of Śiva, there does not exist such a thing precisely because both the state and subject are identical. All the seven states contain together thirty-six elements that are constitutive of what is known as the pure and impure orders of manifestation.

These seven states of the seven subjects have their corresponding "energies" (*śakti-s*). The first kind of energy, known as the *sakala-pramātṛ-śakti*, is such an energy as would let the Sakala subject be dominated by the triad of impurities of *āṇava*, *māyiya*, and *kārma*. The second type of energy, known as the *pralayākala-pramātṛ-śakti*, is such a power that terminates in the establishment of the Pralayākala subject in the state of the void (*śūnya*), which is characterized by total unawareness. The third energy, called the

vijñānākala-pramātṛi-śakti, is such a power that leads to the dissolution of two impurities, namely, *māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala.* On account of the removal of these two impurities, there remains only the *āṇava-mala,* and this impurity is dominant among the subjects of Vijñānākala type. Then we have the energy that represents the Mantra-subject. On account of this energy, the subject has the experience of *ahaṁ-ahaṁ, idaṃ-idaṃ.* The fifth energy, known as the *mantreśvara-pramāṭṛ-śakti,* represents the subjects called Mantreśvara, which is equated with the state of Īśvara. Then we have the state of Sadāśiva, which represents the subject called Mantramaheśvara, and whose energy is known as the *mantramaheśvara-pramāṭṛ-śakti.* Finally, we have the state of Śiva, and the energy, known as the *śiva-pramāṭṛ-śakti,* finds itself already established in the absolute I-ness, which is the Absolute.

The Classification of the Principle of Animation

The principle of animation of various existents corresponds to their mode of existence or spiritual status. The basic principle of animation is called *prāṇa.* It is on account of the vital breath that the biological functions of an existent become possible. Once animated by *prāṇa,* living beings thereby are differentiated from such entities that are insentient. All types of existents, from Sakala to Akala, function in and through the power of *prāṇa.* The *prāṇa* as the power of animation operates differently at several levels of animation. The operation of *prāṇa,* for example, is quite different at the level of waking than what it is when one is in deep sleep. Similarly it functions differently among different beings, depending upon the nature of their mode of existence. The operation of *prāṇa* among the Pralayākala beings is quite different from the beings who, for example, are of Vijñānākala type. The classification of *prāṇa,* which goes back to the Vedic texts, is of five kinds, namely, *prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna,* and *vyāna. Prāṇa* and *apāna* are said to be the two aspects of the vital breath that is essential for the sustenance of life for those living beings that have an embodied mode of life (*sakala*) (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā,* 3.1.19). When *prāṇa* and *apāna* merge, through the yogic practice of *prāṇāyāma,* into each other, and thereby eliminate their respective particularity,

then emerges a state of awareness that is characterized by cosmic unity. The vital breath, thus, has one more function apart from keeping the embodied existents alive–and this function is to allow the emergence of awareness of unity. This dissolving of *prāṇa* and *apāna* into each other leads to the emergence of the equalizing breath, namely, of *samāna*. On account of this merger the awareness of unity with I-consciousness shines forth. The state of dissolution normally occurs in the state of deep sleep (*suṣupti*). The state of unity that comes into being upon the dissolution of *prāṇa* and *apāna* into each other results in the emergence of *samāna* state or "the equalizing state." The state of *samāna* is actualized in the state of *suṣupti*, which corresponds to the dreamless state (ibid., 3.2.19). As the state of deep sleep represents the state of total rest, so it is responsible in energizing the function of animation. The beings among which this principle of animation operates are the Pralayākala existents. As the *samāna* breath emerges upon the dissolution of *prāṇa* and *apāna* into each other, so the Pralayākala beings, while existing as disembodied beings during the period of cosmic dissolution, actualize the state of dissolution. The state of dissolution is really experienced when one is in deep sleep. There is a close correspondence between the *samāna*, deep sleep and the Pralayākala beings. The fourth state of animation is known as that of *udāna*, or "the ascendent state." It is a state in which comes to complete cessation the empirical thought-processes. As a consequence of this cessation, the sense of egoity disappears, which means that the I-ness of supreme consciousness shines forth in its full glory. In this state of cessation mind stop its activity of conjuring up of thoughts, and accordingly it has been equated with the yogic state of the Fourth (*turya*). The *udāna* principle of animation operates usually among the Vijñānākala beings. The spiritual glow of *udāna* state also gets intensified among the beings known as Mantra, Mantreśvara, and Mantramaheśvara. The yogī who has attained this state experiences the rising up of a burning sensation in the spinal cord (*suṣumnā-nāḍī*) (ibid., 3. 2. 20). The burning sensation is seen as a kind of intimation concerning the arousal of *kuṇḍalinī* which, as the energy of Śiva, represents the Mother Goddess. The complete arousal of the *kuṇḍalinī* is accomplished

when the state of *vyāna* is reached. The *vyāna* state of animation results in the experience of complete unity or what may be called penetration (*samāveśa*). The perfect undifferentiated state exists only in the Absolute, viz., in Paramaśiva. Accordingly it is known as that state that transcends the Fourth (*turyātīta*) (*Tantrāloka,* 6. 186).

Bondage versus Freedom

It would appear that the Trika assertion concerning the Absolute as being non-dual is contradicted by the experience of duality that each one of us experiences while conducting the day-to-day activities in the world. TheTrika accepts the hard-nosed evidence that the worldly experience of each individual is characterized by the duality of subject-object. The very structure of the language of knowledge is dualistic in orientation. This experience of duality, however, occurs, so asserts the Trika, on account of ignorance (*avidyā, akhyāti*). It is ignorance that is seen to be responsible in giving rise to every kind of limitation in terms of the differentiated knowledge (cf. *Tantrāloka,* 1.23: *malaṃ ajñānamicchanti saṁsārāṅkurakāraṇaṃ*). The sense of difference or of limitation is seen to be the outcome of ignorance which is equated to impurity, and which translates itself into the experience of the self as being bound and finite (*apūrṇamanyyatarūpamajñānanaṃ*) (*Tantrasāra,* chap. 5). It is the erroneous acceptance of the self as being bound or limited that is what is constitutive of bondage. Insofar as ignorance itself is concerned, it is said to be of two types: innate ignorance (*pauruṣa-ajñāna*) and intellectual ignorance (*bauddha-ajñāna*) (cf. *Tantrāloka-viveka,* 1.36). While ignorance functions as a kind of veil that hides the luminosity of the essential nature of the self, it is the root impurity of limitation (*āṇava-mala*) that is largely responsible in giving rise to ignorance. This inherited ignorance, on the one hand, terminates in the emergence of the impurity of differentiation (*māyīya-mala*) and the impurity of action (*kārma-mala*) and, on the other hand, gives rise to such forms of knowledge that are either dualistic or limited in their range (see *Tantrāloka,* 1.54,56; 6.76). In this manner both ignorance and impurity go hand in hand insofar as the causing of bondage is concerned–and

bondage is nothing but the experience of the deficiency of freedom and in terms of which finitude is identified as being an essential aspect of the self. Although ignorance is said to be beginningless (*anādi*), yet it can be removed through such theoretical and practical means that the Trika has prescribed.

In contrast to bondage and non-freedom, there is the state of liberation or freedom (*mokṣa, mukti*). Freedom from bondage, or to put it in the language of Trika, from the dense fog of limitations or finitude, is nothing but the experiential realization of the union of identity between the supposedly finite self and the infinite Self, which is but Paramaśiva itself. Freedom, in the language of Pratyabhijñā philosophy, denotes the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) concerning one's own-being, which, from a practical point of view,means the attainment of the primordial state of I-consciousness (*akṛtrima-ahaṁ-parāmarśa*). As to what this state of I-consciousness is, is explained by Utpaladeva (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.6.1) thus:

> The inner self-awareness shining as "I," though being conscious light (*prakāśa*) in its essence and having subtle speech as its form, is not any definite mental idea (*vikalpa*). This is because an idea, being decisive in its character, rejects all possible similar ideas, inviting duality (of "that" and "not of that").

This is exactly what Abhinavagupta says concerning the content of liberation when he asserts that "the state of liberation is nothing else than being aware of one's own intrinsic nature." This awareness of one's essential nature is in terms of awareness of being I-consciousness (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*). When expressed in theological terms, it denotes the realization of identity of the self with Paramaśiva. Upon the realization of the unity of Being, there occurs the transformation of the individual consciousness (*citta*) into what may be called the Universal Consciousness (*cit*) (see *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ, sūtra* 13). In the state of bondage there is hardly any awareness as to what is constitutive of one's essential nature – and for this reason it is equated with such a state in which freedom is curtailed. The state of liberation emerges upon the complete eradication of impurities, which results in the

emergence of knowledge that is perfectly poised towards the realization of one's essential nature as being nothing else than I-consciousness. Upon the removal of the obscuring factors, which basically are the products of Māyā, there dawns the knowledge concerning one's own-being, and as a result of which eventuates the disappearance of the imaginary distinctions with regard to the Self (cf. *Tantrāloka,* 1.24). The salvific knowledge is basically the gnosis of the "transcendental I," which as the luminosity of Light (*prakāśa*) expresses itself in the form of pure "I am" (*ahaṁ-vimarśa*). It means that the pure Being simultaneously is also the self-conscious bliss (*ānanda*), which expresses itself in the form of perfect freedom of will.

The knowledge of one's own-being (*svarūpa*) is not to be treated as a kind of acquisition or attainment of something which one did not possess prior to its acquisition. Liberation is nothing else than the realization of one's essential nature of the Self as being identical with Paramaśiva in terms of absolute autonomy. This knowledge of the Self as pure Being, perfect bliss and freedom emerges upon the negation of ignorance, and thereby of impurities, and which simultaneously parallels with the emergence of innate knowledge (*pauruṣa-jñāna*). This knowledge of liberation, in the ultimate sense of the word, is the knowledge of identity with Paramaśiva, and thus is affirmed the Upaniṣadic supreme gnostic statement, which is: "All this is *brahman.*" It is an all-inclusive experience in terms of which everything is dissolved (*kṣaya*) into the Supreme Self (cf. *Paramārthasāra,* v. 48). As a result of this realization of identity, there arises the vision that affirms that whatever is "out there" is but the projection of the Self in terms of its glory (*aiśvarya*) (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā,* 4.1.12). The one who has the Beatific Vision of identity is spoken of as being liberated-while-alive (*jīvanmukta*). For the liberated one everything pulsates, shines forth as well as shimmers with the undifferentiated fullness of the bliss of the Absolute, which is but Paramaśiva. It is an experience in terms of which is proclaimed that Śiva is All and All is Śiva. Thus the liberated-one, in the words of Abhinavagupta (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī,* 4.1.15), is the one "who has continuously practiced burying (*samāveśa*) in Śiva and has fully

recognized the energies of knowledge and activity as being the pure freedom of the Lord can know and do all he desires even though he is still associated with the body. He is not only deified, in the ordinary sense of the word, but he is fundamentally free because he uses ... the divine powers of will belonging to Paramaśiva and lives in eternal freedom."

It is now quite explicit that the Trika understanding of liberation consists in recognizing essential unity of the Self, which is equated with the experience of unimpeded freedom (*svātantry*) and fullness (*pūrṇatva*). This experience of freedom and fullness is nothing else than the experience of non-difference between *mokṣa* and *bhoga*. So release from bondage is not so much as freedom from suffering as much as it is such a transcendental experience in which is resolved the dialectic of conflict that emerges on account of dualized thought-constructs. The liberated-one looks at life-in-the-world as well as the world from the perspective of freedom and fullness of Being, which for him signifies that whatever there is, is permeated by the full presence of the Lord. In this manner is transcended the dialectic of opposites like love and hate, good and evil, pleasure and pain, etc. In the state of Beatific Vision, or what is called *the state of the Fourth* (*turya*) is experienced the unity of Being in terms of the bliss of the immortal nectar. The character of the experience is ineffable precisely because it is characterized by transcendence. Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* (chap. 2) has explained in the following words the nature of this transcendental experience thus:

> All this is therefore one Reality – a Reality undivided by time, unconditioned by space, unenfeebled by accidents, unconstrained by configurations, unexpressed by words and unmanifested by the norms of knowledge. It is the cause, at its own will and pleasure, of the attainment of the essences of these things, from time to norms. It is the sovereignly free Reality, the concentration of beatitude. And I am absolutely It – there, within me, is reflected the universe (Jose Pereira, op. cit., p. 376).

The Doctrine of Grace

The final cosmic activity of the Lord is said to be that of grace/revelation (*anugraha*), and it is through grace that the Lord reveals

himself as to who he is. It is for this reason that the self-disclosure of God has been equated to his grace (*śaktipāta*). It is on account of divine grace that there arises the initial movement or desire for liberation in the individual being. Upon the emergence of this stir for liberation, the aspirant directs his effort at knowing as to how God's disclosure may be actualized. The Trika is of the view that it is God's grace that should be seen as the main cause of an individual's search for liberation. Man by himself has very little possibility even to entertain such a thought, let alone seek liberation. Grace as the cause for liberation denotes that an individual is totally dependent upon God to the extent he remains in the state of bondage (cf. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1.1). The descent of divine grace upon the aspirant occurs without favouring one or the other. It is impartial and without any distinction. The effect of grace is felt to what extent impurities are made non-operational. As the impact of impurities upon each individual is different both in dimension and weight, so the working of grace will also differ from individual to individual. There are individuals who function in the dense surroundings of impurities, and there are individuals who have thinned, through spiritual practices, the impact of impurities. The thinning of impurities is dependent to what measure they have reached the state of maturity. It is in a graduated manner that the ripening of impurities (*malapāka*) occurs. The working of grace will bear its fruit much faster in those in whom impurities have reached the state of maturity. The ones in whom impurities are still unripe may not experience the working of grace in the same measure as in those who are on the threshold of abrogating their impact.

The Trika is of the view that grace must not be treated as being the result of one's religious deeds or as the outcome of one's merit. Grace is purely a free gift of God (*Tantrāloka*, 13. 256-57). Insofar as the result of meritorious deeds is concerned, it has been classified into three types. The good deeds may (1) determine the future birth of an individual in some specific abode or species; (2) the span of life (*āyū*) that an individual may live, and (3) the kind of pleasures he may enjoy. Neither grace nor liberation is seen to be the result of one's meritorious deeds. The meritorious deeds, instead

of abolishing the wheel of becoming, only enhance it. The distinctiveness that differentiates the good deeds from the evil ones lies in the fact that the former may provide better conditions for one's rebirth, whereas the latter may not. Action, whether good or bad, terminates in a definite fruit, and the quality of the fruit is dependent on the quality of action. All said and done, one's present or future birth will solely be determined by the quality of actions one has performed or is performing. As to why God should bestow grace as a free gift upon the individuals is a question that needs an appropriate response. It is the very nature of God, maintain the Trika thinkers, to bestow grace upon people. It is the playful free will of God that is the real cause of grace. The descent of grace upon the individual occurs in accordance with the free will of God, which, according to the Trika, is the essential nature of God. While pouring down his grace upon people, God necessarily does not take into account as to whether they have sinned or not. Grace basically is meant for the sinner, which means that God does not make any distinction between the sinner and the righteous when it comes to the question of grace. This aspect of grace is well described by Utpaladeva when he says: "Sir, you should have taken into consideration the merits and demerits of a person when bestowing your grace upon him, but you never do so." In the second half of the verse he remarks: "But, having played this game with me, why are you now delaying the dawning of realization within me" (Utpaladeva, op.cit., chap. 15).

The Trika Śaivism, while accepting the role of divine grace as a means of hastening the process of liberation, does not at the same time discount self-effort as a means of reaching the redemptive goal of liberation. Self-effort is seen as one of the most important ingredients for the development of inner transformation. The very attempt at self-effort may be seen as being the effect of divine grace itself. If self-effort is detached from divine grace, then there is all the possibility of transforming it into an egoistic enterprise. It would mean that an individual does not need the help of God to pursue his spiritual path. Such an interpretation of self-effort is not acceptable to the Trika thinkers. The bound individual, however strong of will he may be, is always in need of divine grace.

This dependence on grace discloses the fact that man is a contingent being insofar as he leads an embodied mode of existence. The Trika, thus, maintains that they alone persevere in the path of self-effort who remain conscious of divine presence, or, in other words, God pours down his grace in abundance upon such people. The divine grace of God may be seen as the initial movement towards salvation. It is on account of grace that there emerges within the individual love for God. Love as well as grace go, thus, together in helping the individual on the path of liberation or self-realization (*Tantrāloka,* 13. 140).

The Trika Śaivas have accepted the love of God , and thereby divine grace, as a legitimate spiritual means of reaching the ultimate goal of liberation from the revolving wheel of becoming, or what is known as the cycle of rebirth. It is divine grace of God which, on the one hand, is seen to be the fundamental cause for the emergence of love for God within the heart of a seeker and, on the other hand, it is really one's love for God that terminates in the fall of grace (*śaktipāta*) (Utpaladeva, op. cit., 8.1). Once grace begins to work in the recipient, it directs the recipient to a preceptor that would be appropriate for him. The *guru* also showers his grace in terms of instructing the recipient in the divine knowledge of scriptures. The thrust of the theoretical knowledge is to enable the disciple to grasp intellectually as to what is the nature of ultimate reality and what kind of relationship, if any, exists between it and the world. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the preceptor also imparts knowledge concerning the practice of Śaiva-yoga. It is through the practice of Śaiva-yoga that the disciple is so empowered as to be able to know who he essentially is. The preceptor also, through his spiritual powers, burns up the impurities within the disciple. This is the spiritual trajectory that the disciple has to travel. There are, however, some individuals who do not need to go through the above processes. These exceptional individuals are so fortunate as would become the participants of such grace that is speedy and intensive. As a result of this intense grace the seeker does not have to approach any preceptor for spiritual upliftment. Whatever knowledge such a seeker needs for his salvation arises, due to divine intervention,

within him. This spontaneous arising of divine knowledge is technically called *pratibhā* (*Tantrāloka.*, 13. 140). *Pratibhā* is such supernal knowledge as would always shine as the luster of consciousness. This spiritual glow of consciousness is present in all living creatures (ibid., 13. 135).

The divine grace of God is said to be of two kinds: liberation-oriented grace and pleasure-oriented grace. The former type of grace creates within the individual such an earnest desire for liberation that he seeks nothing else than liberation alone. The latter type of grace terminates in the enjoyable experiences of divine powers (*siddhi*-s). The former kind of grace accordingly is spoken of as being transcendent (*parā*) and the latter one worldly or inferior (*apara*) (ibid., 13.254, 56). The grace that leads to transcendence is either intense (*tīvra*), medium (*madhya*) or low (*manḍa*). The same is the case with the inferior type of grace. The grace that is intense gives immediate result, whereas the medium form of grace will take some time in giving the required result. The grace of low intensity may take a longer period of time in enabling the seeker to reach the goal. This understanding of grace tells us that whether one seeks liberation or worldly goals, one is dependent on grace in either case. The dependence on grace points out the fact that man as a creature of finitude is contingent, and is in need of divine succor at every step of life. It also affirms the interdependence of human relations.

The grace of God becomes operational the moment an individual begins his search for truth and in terms of which is given birth to the inclination of finding out such ways and means whereby the ultimate goal of self-realization is reached. In order to facilitate the working of grace, the Trika has devised methods or ways of spirituality in such a manner as would suit each individual's temperament. The aim of each method is to enable the seeker to reach his goal. As to what these methods of liberation are, are being explained below.

The Methods of Liberation

It is *a priori* assumed that the state of embodied existence is one of bondage, and freedom from such bondage must be the ultimate

goal of life. As to how to reach this ultimate goal of freedom is enunciated in terms of the soteriology that each religious denomination has, in the light of its metaphysical thinking, prescribed such means or methods (*upāya-s*) as would be appropriate for its followers. The Trika has formulated its soteriological methods of liberation within the framework of its metaphysical-cum-theological understanding of reality as well as of life-in-the-world.

The Trika approach to liberation as well as to the "methods of liberation" (*mokṣa-upāya*) have to be viewed in the context of its understanding of divine grace (*śaktipāta*) as being the fundamental soteriological tool (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1.1). As grace is considered to be the basic *raison d'etre* of liberation, so it is natural for the Trika thinkers to assert that mere knowledge of an object does not necessarily terminate in the experience of joy. In the context of liberation it would mean that liberation is not realized simply by knowing the qualities of the Self. It is, instead, realized only when, through the operation of divine grace, the liberative methods become so efficacious as would remove such veils of ignorance or impurities that the self-shining nature of the Self is revealed. It is on account of grace that there dawns such recognitive gnosis whereby the Upaniṣadic proclamation–Thou art That (*tat tvamasi*)–is realized in terms of the experience of non-difference. It is through the experience of non-difference (*abheda*) that one plunges into the redemptive plenitude of blissful freedom. This immediate awareness concerning the essential nature as being identical with I-consciousness emerges either by receiving spiritual instructions or by going through the process of initiation (*dīkṣā*). The very initiation by or instructions from a *guru* is itself the outcome of divine grace. The descent of grace is not dependent as to how much merit we have accumulated. It is absolutely a free gift of God. It is, thus, right to say that it is through grace that the Lord reveals himself to whomsoever he chooses to reveal (see *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.23).

While making grace as the fundamental cause of liberation, Trika thereby does not discount the role that self-effort plays insofar as the realization of ultimate soteriological goal of liberation is concerned. The very effort of trudging the path of salvation is,

according to the Trika, the outcome of the descent of grace. The descent of grace, however, is dependent as to what kind of spiritual progress an individual has made. If the individual has just begun his spiritual journey, he cannot expect grace to be of intensive nature; it will be of low intensity (*manḍa*). A person who has somewhat advanced spiritually, for him the fall of grace would be of medium intensity (*madhya*). A person who has, however, burnt out most of his previous "impressions" (*saṁskāra*-s) can expect the fall of grace that would be of intense (*tīvra*) nature (*Tantrāloka*, 13. 142). It would, thus, mean that the spiritual progress towards liberation would be dependent as to the kind of grace one may receive.

Once there is the descent of grace, then there ensues its functioning in terms of which the individual aspirant is asked by his *guru* to follow such a spiritual discipline as would be appropriate for him. The spiritual method could be philosophical, physical or mental in nature. The philosophical method which the Trika considers the most appropriate is that of "recognition" (*pratyabhijñā*). Recognition of one's essential nature as being non-different from Maheśvara is said to terminate in the redemptive freedom and in terms of which is realized the blissful fullness of I-consciousness. Recognition, however, must not be identified with memory (*smṛti*) or with perceptual cognition (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*). It is, rather, the combination of both. Memory is given rise due to the activation of the subliminal impressions (*saṁskāra*-s). Although through perception an object may be cognized as well as perceived, but it is never recognized. In the event of recognition what happens is that the mental impression goes invariably along with the direct perception of the object. The uniqueness of recognition lies in the fact that the object that is being cognized is easily identified with the object that has previously been known. Recognition, thus, is characterized by an intuitive awareness with regard to the identity of the substance that persists through its two states.

As to what recognition denotes is practically illustrated in terms of an example of a lady who is desirous of being loved. She is told of a man who is supposed to be in possession of such qualities that the lady wants to have in her would-be husband. There eventuates

a chance when the lady meets him without knowing that this is the person about whom she has been informed. Upon encountering him, she immediately "recognizes" that this is the person whom she has desired to be her husband. As a result of "recognition" she is overwhelmed by the ecstatic bliss of joy that wells up from within. This is what recognition is all about.

The practical method that the Pratyabhijñā prefers is that of meditation on the five cosmic functions (*pañca-kṛtya*) of the Lord as well as upon the use of such techniques of meditation that enhance the dissolution of thought-constructs (*vikalpa-kṣaya*). The five cosmic activities of the Lord are said to be the emanation of the phenomena (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation of the emanated (*sthiti*), dissolution of the phenomena (*saṁhāra*). In addition to these three activities, the Lord conceals (*tirodhāna*), on the one hand, his essential nature and, on the other hand, reveals (*anugraha*) it in terms of the acts of grace. While meditating on these five cosmic activities of the Lord, the aspirant accordingly is asked to rise from below upwards in such a manner as to perceive the essence of each of them. The act of emanation, thus, is said to denote a specific place and time with reference to the individual. Likewise persistence signifies the preservation of the joy of what the individual has perceived. Dissolution is seen as a process of absorption in the delight of I-consciousness. This process of dissolution symbolizes contraction (*saṁkoca*) with reference to what has been emanated. When this delight is withdrawn, there remains its impression, which rises again when absorption eventuates. Finally, when there is a complete submergence of this delight into I-consciousness, there occurs, in the form of grace, divine revelation. Corresponding to this method of meditation is the dissolution of thought-constructs. It is an accepted fact that the mind is a breeding-ground for all kinds of thoughts, and due to the complexity of thoughts there eventuates disturbance in the mind. The placidity or stillness of the mind, however, cannot be realized by forcing the mind to suppress its activities. Suppression of the mind would give rise to more agitations, which would be a kind of violence against the mind. The only way of overcoming the enormity of thoughts is to dissolve them through the process

of alert passivity, which is to say that one must think of nothing, but allow the mind to release itself from the grip of thoughts. In this manner is achieved stillness, which finally terminates in the immersion (*samāveśa*) into the divine I-consciousness (see *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya, sūtra* 11).

It is within the framework of the doctrine of grace and of recognition that the Trika has formulated its practical methods of liberation in such a manner as would suit the mental and emotional disposition of each individual being. Those who are endowed with a sharp intellect or are spiritually far advanced need not trudge the inferior spiritual paths of liberation. They are asked to plunge directly in such spiritual methods that terminate in the immediate recognition concerning the intrinsic nature of the Self. It is within the perspective of such a vision that the Trika has formulated the four main methods of liberation, which are the Way of the Individual (*āṇava-upāya*), the Way of the Energy (*śākta-upāya*), the Way of Śiva (*śāmbhava-upāya*), and the Null-Way (*an-upāya*) (*Tantrāloka,* 1.258). The Null-Way in the series of methods is so spoken on account of the fact that no physical or mental exertion is involved in it, and for this reason it is given the epithet of Null-Way (*an-upāya*). The first two methods, being inferior in comparison to other two methods, are dependent for their fructification on physical exertion or on mental deliberations. Insofar as the last two methods are concerned, they fully operate within the framework of such grace that is intense, and so accordingly terminate immediately in the delight of I-consciousness (ibid.).

The process of liberation occurs in such a manner as to be reverse to the order of manifestation. The order of manifestation occurs from *śiva-tattva* to that of *pṛthvī-tattva,* whereas the order of liberation occurs in terms of evolutionary ascension from the earth category upward to that of the category of Śiva. The order of manifestation occurs through the levels of bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), which correspond to the levels of manifestation of the Supreme Word (*parāvāk*) in terms of the transcendent (*parā*), seeing (*paśyantī*), middling (*madhyamā*), and the gross (*vaikharī*). At the subjective level the

upward spiritual ascent occurs in terms of the waking state (*jāgrat-avasthā*) being dissolved into that of dream state (*svapna-avasthā*), the dream state into that of deep sleep (*suṣupti-avasthā*), and the state of deep sleep into that of the Fourth (*turya-avasthā*), and the Fourth state into the Beyond the Fourth (*turyātīta*). The first two methods of liberation, also known as the Way of Action (*kriyā-upāya*) and the Way of Knowledge (*jñāna-upāya*), correspond to the levels of manifestation of *kriyā* and *jñāna,* whereas the last two methods, also known as the Way of Will (*icchā-upāya*) and the Way of Bliss (*ānanda-upāya*), parallel the *icchā* and *ānanda* levels of manifestation (ibid., 1.186-187).

The first method, namely, the Individual Method, is spoken of as being inferior in comparison to other methods of liberation on account of its dependence on practices that are purely external and involve much effort. It is due to the involvement of physical exertion that this method is termed as the Way of Action (*kriyā-upāya*). The practices that are pursued in this method consists in the performance of rituals, of offering of oblations in the fire-pit, of meditating on a chosen deity, of engaging in the repetition of a *mantra* (*mantra-japa*), of following such yogic methods that are characterized by physical exertion like, for example, *prāṇāyāma.* Also the aspirant makes uses of the senses (*karaṇa-s*) in such a manner as would be so transformative as to terminate in Self-realization. The goal of Self-realization is reached when there occurs the opening up of the *madhya-dhāma* or what is called the *suṣumṇā.* While following this method, the aspirant begins his spiritual praxis from the standpoint of difference (*bheda*) and finally ends up in the experience of non-difference (*abheda*).

The next method is that of the Way of Energy (*śākta-upāya*). Since the spiritual practices of this method are more mental than physical in nature, so this method is also known as the Way of Knowledge (*jñāna-upāya*). The aspirant of this method, while having transcended the dualistic pattern of thinking, begins his approach to reality from the perspective of difference-cum-non-difference (*bhedābheda*). This method consists of in such mental practices that have an inward orientation, and so would accordingly terminate in the immersion (*samāveśa*) of the individualized

consciousness into the Cosmic Consciousness. It is through the "power of *mantra*" (*mantra-śakti*) that the aspirant is endowed with the intuitive faculty of knowledge (*pratibhā-jñāna*). While ascending upwards, the aspirant reaches such spiritual state whereby the individual consciousness merges into *parā-saṁvid*. As to the kind of state that is attained by following this method is expressed by Utpaladeva thus: "Upon touching the soles of thy feet, there flashes in my mind as if the whole world has immersed into the lake of nectar. Lord, may you always grant this to me!" (*Śivastotrāvalī*, 5.26).

Insofar as the Way of Śiva (*śāmbhava-upāya*), also known as the Way of Will (*icchā-upāya*), is concerned, it is meant for such aspirants who are spiritually highly evolved. The aspirant of this method realizes the consciousness of Śiva by meditating on the category called Śiva *(śiva-tattva)*. Initially the aspirant begins with such forms of meditation as would lead to the dissolving of thought-constructs (*vikalpa-kṣaya*), and thereby to the affirmation that the world is but the reflection of Supreme Consciousness. At the end of the journey the aspirant has the experience of I-consciousness. Moreover, the aspirant makes use of the "will" in such a manner as would lead to the perfect knowledge of identity with the Absolute (*Tantrāloka*, 1. 235). It is such a method whereby perfect identity can be induced at will. The realization of the Absolute is such as to lead to the understanding of the world as being an emanation and play (*kriḍā*) of Śiva and Śakti. The descent of grace is of such intensity as would result in the immediate dawning of the supernal knowledge and in terms of which is experienced that everything is vibrating with the delightful sensation of the cosmic throb.

The last method is called the Way of Naught (*an-upāya*). It is also known as the Way of Bliss (*ānanda-upāya*) (ibid., 2.3). It represents such a spiritual trajectory as to be permeated by divine grace. The divine grace may either flow from the *guru* or may directly descend upon the aspirant. As a result of the working of grace there ensues the immediate realization of the pervasion of the Self (*ātma-vyāpti*) as well as the pervasion of Śiva (*śiva-vyāpti*). While transcending the sense of dependence on external or internal instrumentalities, the aspirant enjoys the perfect freedom

(*svātantrya*), which is equated with the experience of epiphany of divine bliss. It is a path that is not constrained by the flickering perceptions of the mind or by the attachment for the world, and so for the yogī of this path everything is transformed into the glorious worship of the Supreme. Finally, Abhinavagupta has expressed the content of the experience thus:

> It is (none else but) Śiva Himself who, being (of the nature) of unconstrained Will and pure Consciousness, is uninterruptedly shining in my heart. It is (none else but) his Supreme Energy that continuously plays on the edge of my senses. The whole universe is filled with the ever wonderous delight of I-consciousness. In fact, I know not as to what the sound "world" refers to. (Quoted by Mheśvarānanda, in: *Mahārthamañjarī*, p.25)

Iti Śivaṃ